

大魔 神

the japanese fantasy
film journal

2001 number 12

11/11/01

Shaw Bros.' THE BATTLE WIZARD



INNERVIEW

TOKYO FILM FIRM MAKES A TRICK OUT OF TURNING PROFIT

Having assumed the presidency of Tsuburaya Productions on the death of his father (who founded the organization), Noboru Tsuburaya, while maintaining the company's image as a leader in the field of special effects, is also involved in the production and distribution of theatrical and TV films, as well as commercials.

Tsuburaya achieved international prominence with the special effects for GODZILLA, and since that time has made a specialty of miniature work and trick photography. Among its achievements in the former category is a 180 foot monster destroying high-rise buildings; a tidal wave turning over boats; an earthquake causing the collapse of elevated freeways; larger-than-life formation flights; overturning of the 'bullet' train traveling at 320 m.p.h.; and aerospace sequences featuring artificial satellites with space ships and rockets.

In the field of trick camerawork, Tsuburaya's recent effects include a transparent man, whose suit only is visible, but who smokes a cigarette; transforming a man of normal size either to 3 inches or 300 feet tall, as well as creating a liquid man and gas man, the latter able to suffocate the enemy.

As an adjunct, Tsuburaya uses a matte process to marry special effects with normal live-action, while in animation has perfected the mixing of stop-action with conventional animation.

Recently, Tsuburaya was involved with Rankin/Bass Productions in the filming of THE LAST DINOSAUR. Company's export markets include, aside from Japan and Southeast Asia, America, Latin America and Europe. (A reprint from the May 4, 1977 issue of *Variety*)

JAPANESE MAN IS FULL ORCHESTRA WHEN AT HIS MOOG SYNTHESIZER

A conversation between the world of the spirits and the real world: that's how Isao Tomita de-

scribes the music he creates on an electric synthesizer. He has merged as perhaps the world's leading user of the synthesizer, an increasingly popular device that can be programmed to sound like different orchestra instruments. Rock groups especially have taken to using synthesizers because they often like the special 'edgy' quality it creates better than the real sound of the instrument being imitated.

Tomita works with a Moog synthesizer, named after the man who developed it. From the music of Debussy, Moussorgsky and Stravinsky, he produces pitches, combines them, builds up harmony and rhythm, and finally creates symphonic music.

The Moog, the most popular of the synthesizers, has a short piano keyboard attached to a device that looks like an old-fashioned telephone switchboard. When the synthesizer is programmed to sound like a saxophone, trumpet or any other instrument, playing the keyboard produces the sound of that instrument. Tape recorders are used to combine the sounds of each instrument into musical compositions.

"The synthesizer is like an artist's palette," Tomita says. "Music up to now has had definite colors—the violin, trumpet, and other instruments. But the synthesizer doesn't have limits. There are no definite sounds. You create the sounds you have in your mind," he said.

The 44-year-old Tomita's compositions are used as background music

in many Japanese movies and television programs (an example of his fantasy work being the score to Toho's CATASTROPHE 1999 and television's KIMBA THE WHITE LION). He began to play classical music through a synthesizer four years ago, and has produced three albums whose total sales approach one million records.

Tomita recently returned from his first concert tour, during which he gave nine concerts in West Germany, Holland and Britain. "A concert of synthesized music is a kind of sculpture music," he said in an interview. "Usually, concerts come from the stage. For me, the whole theater is the place where the music must come from and there are speakers even behind the audience. Sounds move near you and away from you."

It takes Tomita a month to produce five minutes of synthesized music. So on his concert tour he used tapes of sounds made in Tokyo, and mixed them on stage through the use of four speakers.

"Most people listen to music from two small speakers in a small room, which is like looking at a photograph of a giant painting."

"I want to produce sound on a large scale," he said.

His 10-by-12-foot studio, a room in the apartment where he lives with his wife and two children, is filled with \$150,000 worth of sound and music equipment. There he is working on his fourth album, which he hopes to finish by December.

He is a soft-spoken man who is a traditional Japanese in his love



of the old Japanese theater entertainment of Kabuki and Noh drama. As an art history student, he studied composing through a course offered at the YMCA and won recognition for some of his works while still a student. He first learned of the synthesizer in 1969 from the record jacket of "Switched-On-Bach," an American album that helped make the new electric instrument popular. It took Tonita two years of searching to find a synthesizer at a Japanese trading company and turn his career in a new direction.

"I am still in the stage of experimenting. As in painting or sculpture, there are no limitations. If the sounds I have in my mind cannot be produced, they must be created."

"I consider myself a player, composer and arranger. There has been a continuing division of labor in the production of music. I feel I am going back to the style of the old musicians who played and sang by themselves, without the collaboration of many people."

"Stravinsky's 'Firebird,' for example, would require a 70-to-100-piece orchestra, but with the synthesizer, these sounds can be produced by one person."

With a contract to produce five more albums, Tonita said he will be busy in his studio for several years. There will be a little time to go swimming and horseback riding but not, he regretted, enough time to study English.

(A reprint of a Kathryn Tolbert article from the October 5, 1976 issue of the *Toledo Blade*)

MONSTER FILMS IMPRESS SENSE OF EXISTENTIALISM

I...had the opportunity to see the first festival of monster films last Friday night. But instead of finding my inhuman heroes faded and less convincing since the Saturday afternoons of my youth, I was if anything more awed and impressed with the sense of apocalyptic existentialism that runs through even the most crass commercial efforts of Japanese cinema.

In *RODAN* man is the victim of his own mistakes. Atonic testing has caused the re-emergence of a giant pterodactyl. But the monster, instead of impressing us with his primitivism, has traits which only underline the puniness of human technology. It has a wingspan of over

500 feet, flies faster than the speed of sound, and is immune to artillery fire. Instead of killing the monster, the best that can be managed is to wall it up inside a volcano.

Even though people attempt to destroy Rodan, there is an implicit respect for him and what he stands for. Rather than asserting man's mastery over nature, even in its most "primitive" forms, the best we can manage is to sweep it under the rug from which at any time it might return (in the inevitable sequel) to haunt us once again.

In *GODZILLA VS. THE THING* commercialism is exposed. A huge egg washes up on the beach of a fishing village after a storm. Local entrepreneurs claim it and begin building an amusement park around it. As a coincidence, the storm also revives Godzilla who sets about the unfinished business of destroying Japan. As it turns out, the egg is actually owned by a "primitive" tribe living on an atoll once used in, you guessed it, an atonic test. Wanting the egg back, the tribe, through the use of magic, sets Mothra (also referred to as The Thing) upon the home islands. Only when they are assured of the return of the egg do they agree to close ranks with civilization and order Mothra to attack Godzilla. Mothra loses the battle with Godzilla, but the egg hatches, releasing two huge silk worms who spin a deadly cocoon around Godzilla.

Commercialism, as the root cause of the sudden appearance of the monsters, is revealed in all its material crassness. Not only do the capitalists brutalize nature, but they lie, beat up newspaper people, and murder, all for the sake of the almighty yen. Only through the magical, non-technical intervention of the tribal islanders, is the threat to society attenuated.

(A reprint of a Martin Ghorich article from the April 25, 1974 issue of the *UCSB Daily Nexus*)

THE BIGGER THE MONSTER THE HARDER IT FALLS

According to Japanese legend (or at least according to the Japanese legends I receive in the mail from press agents), Godzilla was a prehistoric monster who stood 400 feet tall and was not to be messed with. I believe it. A monster the height of a 38-story building with a good-sized foyer can be intimidating. Talk all you want about King Kong climbing the Empire State Building; it probably wouldn't even hold Godzilla.

The way I figure it, Godzilla could stand with one foot on the



Art: Tim Johnson

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Hancock and the other on the Sears Tower and mess up TV reception all the way to Lake Geneva, Wis. (where the U.S. Constitution guarantees your right to see topless and bottomless go-go dancers, by the way, although I've always thought that a go-go dancer without her top and bottom would hardly be worth the drive to Wisconsin).

The original Godzilla lay dormant for a long time, according to some figures I've jotted down here. If you reckon that time began at 3 a.m. on March 28, 4004 B.C., which is the most widely quoted figure, then Godzilla was sacked out on the ocean floor for maybe 5,959 years before reactivated from H-bomb experiments reactivated him in 1955. He made it to the surface just in time to star in GODZILLA which turns up on "Creature Features" every now and then.

To be sure, even the original Godzilla hardly looked 400 feet tall, but then perhaps he wasn't Sanforized. He made a lot of money anyway, and returned in 1956 in GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS, a film which Raymond Burr hopes you have forgotten he starred in. Godzilla came within a whisker of destroying Tokyo in that one, before he was outwitted by a combination of human courage and scientific cunning, as they say.

Despite the promising little film career that seemed to be shaping up for him, Godzilla turned out to be marked for tragedy. Being prehistoric and all, he apparently shared with the botulinus bacteria a tendency to shrink upon contact with air. He was barely 30 feet tall when he battled King Kong a few years later, and by the time he made GODZILLA VS. THE THING in 1964, he was on the wrong side of 30 feet and had been reduced to battling a green-eyed bee whose children squirted spider-web juice all over him. It was not the first time movie buffs had witnessed the disintegration of a star, but it was one of the saddest. They say the big fall hard, but hell...

Anyway, Godzilla went into retirement after his 1964 comeback, rented a little cottage on one of the smaller Japanese islands and married a cute little rock lobster-tail from South Africa. His friends would receive Christmas cards from him, and that was that.

In the meantime, as you may have heard, the Japanese economy was climbing to dizzying heights. Inspired probably by the effort necessary to rebuild Tokyo and house its 6 million inhabitants after Godzilla razed the city, the Japanese got into industry and began turning out

cars, transistors, pop-up toasters, the works. But then President Nixon devalued the dollar, slapped import taxes on everything and dealt the Japanese economy a body blow. And so I suppose we can probably thank Mr. Nixon for Godzilla's final comeback attempt, GODZILLA'S REVENGE.

The tired, old monster, who will never see 6,000 again, came out of retirement to make one last movie. It was sort of his contribution to the Japanese export quota, and so I suppose we shouldn't judge him too harshly.

This time he's only about 6 feet 7 inches tall, good enough for the NBA but no match for King Kong. What's worse, he exists only in a child's dream. He lives on Monster Island, which can be reached by a Pan American flight, and sadness has crept into his old age. Once Godzilla could destroy whole supermarkets with his fiery-hot breath, but he fathered a son late in life, and Godzilla Jr. can only produce smoke-rings. This causes Godzilla no end of distress, and he informs his offspring that he'd better shape up. The kid tries, but has no luck until Godzilla steps on his tail one day. Then Junior lets loose with a mighty blast that parboils a crab, and the movie ends happily with father patting son on the head.

I think that's great, don't you, what with so many movies being downbeat these days?

(A reprint of a Roger Ebert article from the January 13, 1972 issue of the Chicago Sun-Times)

HEY! THAT MONSTER SPEAKS ENGLISH!

Anyone who's been here in Japan for any length of time at all knows that John Wayne speaks fluent Japanese. They know this because they've heard him with their own ears as he stumps across the screen in any number of old Hollywood shoot-'em-ups on Japan's ubiquitous boob tube. It's probably safe to say, though, that not too many *gaijin* understand in Japanese, any more than they understand just how, as Mr. Wayne himself might put it, he learned it so good.

The secret word is dubbing, with the verb "dub" apparently derived from "double," meaning a substitute actor or singer. And that, of course, is exactly what dubbers do—they substitute their voices for the voices of the actors and actresses who appear in the original film, whether that film be in French, English, Japanese or Urdu.

Understandably, most of the dubbing being done in Japan is from a foreign language into Japanese—primarily for Japanese television—but there is at least one group of professional amateurs who regularly dub Japanese feature films into English for export to a dozen countries.

Now "professional amateurs" might sound like a contradiction in terms, but it's actually a pretty good description of the talented *gaijin* who hold down full-time jobs



Photo © Tami Co., Ltd.

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here in Tokyo yet spend many a long weekend in some dimly-lit studio--in happy anonymity--matching their voices and English-language dialog to the lip movements of Japan's most famous movie stars.

The first Japanese film ever dubbed into English here in Japan was an underwhelming Toho comedy called **THREE DOLLS IN COLLEGE** that was dubbed at the old Aoi studio in Tanjike in October, 1959, and three of the gaffin who helped to make cinematic history with that pioneering effort are still living in Tokyo--Sandra Mori, Carl Hansen and Bill Ross.

Time marches on, and the dozen of the dubbers here in Tokyo today is that same Bill Ross, whose Frontier Enterprises is the only company in Japan that's regularly engaged in the dubbing of Japanese films into English. Ross recently finished his 361st film--which has got to be something of a record--a Toei feature that involves the ravenous activities of a prehistoric monster who suddenly makes the scene in the shadow of Mt. Fuji (which, of course, erupts in the grande finale) and proceeds to turn a happy summer outing into a kind of plesiosaurian free lunch.

It's a good thing Ross provides his dubbers with an ample supply of cough drops (in addition to bagfuls of Big Macs and gallons of coffee) because they had to wade through an English-language script for **THE MONSTER FROM FUJI** (which has been titled **LEGEND OF DINOSAURS AND MONSTER BIRDS** for English-language release--Ed.) that was 10% pseudo-scientific dialog ("You mean, professor?"--slight pause--"it was a Mesozoic pterodactyl?") and 90% assorted gasps, gurgles and screams of terror. Gasps and gurgles are child's play for the professional dubber, but screaming from 9 to 5 for two days running is a license for laryngitis.

But how do they dub a film? How do they go about it? What do they actually do?

Okay, first of all the film is cut into as many as 200 pieces, with most of the pieces running some 20 or 30 seconds or less, and rarely as much as a minute. The ends of each piece are spliced together to form an endless "loop" and when these loops are put on the projector, because they are loops, they keep showing the same short scene over and over again until the actors and actresses in the studio have been able to synchronize their English-language dialog with the lip movements on the screen.

Each actor and actress works from a script in which each line of dialog was carefully timed against the original Japanese sound track.

For example, an actor in the original film might say "Ikimasho," which translates as "Let's go." However, "Let's go" is not enough dialog to completely cover the mouth movements of "Ikimasho," so the English dialog will be padded out as "Alright, let's go" or some such. A well-timed script is the key to a well-dubbed film, and this infinitely tedious job of timing is done long before the dubbing in the studio ever begins.

Good dubbers are generally even-tempered, well-coordinated people who wouldn't know a nervous tantrum if they had one. They've got to be, because they are not only required to keep one eye on their script, they have to keep the other eye on the screen and at least one ear

tuned to the original sound track by way of a set of headphones. This sometimes makes for a pretty nerve-wracking experience for the first-timer.

Like everything else connected with making movies, dubbing is an exercise in organized confusion, a kind of controlled chaos, and the individual dubbers, seeing only short bits and pieces of film, rarely know what it's all about, and those who attend the screening of the completed film are generally in for some big surprises. Not the least of these surprises is the sound of their own voice coming from the mouth of a Japanese film star. (A reprint of a Elliot Rankin article from the Japan Times.)

TOEI STUDIOS Proudly Announce Their Highest Budgeted Production in Their 30-Year History



ORIENT EXPRESS



the phoenix

"He who desires to possess everything must learn to be content with nothing." This homily out of antiquity, authentic or fabricated, is the catch-phrase used by producer Frank Wong for his picture *THE PHOENIX*, a 1979 fantasy period-film from Taiwan now available for release in the Far East by its production studio, Eastern Media Film Production (H.K.) Ltd., with world sales elsewhere handled by JAD International, Ltd. of New York.

F. Kenneth Lin's screenplay details the adventures of Ty, a penniless-fisherman-turned-wealthy-businessman due to his discovery of the Magic Bronze Pot and the equally magical Bamboo Book. Both objects are the lucre sought by the evil Flower Fox. She has traveled far from her home in space to steal them for they will aid her in her desire to control the universe. Ty is aided in his travels by a magic sword and a giant, mythological bird called the Phoenix as he faces Grasshopper, Flower Fox's guardian, a giant tidal wave, and an enormous warrior created out of stone, the latter two phenomenon both conjured up by Flower Fox to stop Ty.

Mention must be made of the use of popular screen villain Richard Kiel as "Grasshopper" who guards the remote island upon which Flower Fox, played by Betty Noonan, has ensconced herself, and who battles the daring Ty, essayed by Charles Lang, in his quest to recover the devices of magic.

Also notable is the selection of Sadsama Arikawa as director of special visual effects. Credited as "Sam" Arikawa in English-language publicity, Sadamasu, known mostly for his work with former employer Toho International of Japan, is also listed as co-director with Richard Gass.

The 92 minute film, photographed by Michael Torioka in Eastmancolor and quadraphonic sound, features a score by Lawrence Borden.

LEFT: Publicity art for *THE PHOENIX* rendered by the very talented fantasy artist, Boris Vallejo. Inset top: Richard Kiel, more recently known as "Jaws" in two James Bond films, plays "Grasshopper," guardian of the film's villainess. Inset bottom: Charles Lang as the film's protagonist "Ty," here being seduced by Flower Fox's agents sent to steal from him the Magic Bronze Pot which can produce anything asked of it. RIGHT TOP: The end of the giant stone warrior commanded by Flower Fox to thwart Ty. RIGHT MIDDLE: Ty riding in the claw of the Phoenix, a gigantic bird under his influence, knowledge gained from the Bamboo Book, another magical device which solves all problems. Note wires supporting the actor. RIGHT BOTTOM: The flying seductresses of the evil Flower Fox.





DAIEI: A HISTORY OF THE GREATER JAPAN MOTION PICTURE COMPANY

Daiei's career has not been an uneventful one. Nor has the former president, Masaichi Nagata, been idle in affecting the studio's uneven course. In this issue we present our look at the Daiei film factory beginning with Nagata's earliest dealings prior to the studio's formation up to the company's revival in 1974 following Daiei's 1971 bankruptcy closing. A filmography of Daiei's 30, fantasy and horror motion pictures will be presented in the second and concluding portion of this article to be printed in a future issue.

In 1933 Nikkatsu, in a move to enlarge its facilities, shopped several Tokyo studio sites, finally purchasing Tanagawa, an independent recently failed, building additional sound stages at the site as well. This activity worried Shochiku who decided that a second subsidiary, in addition to its recently organized Shinko, would be formed to insure its rival's failure. Within a month Dai-Ichi Eiga was formed, and Masaichi Nagata became its nominal head.

Nagata, who had entered Nikkatsu as a studio guide in 1924, eventually was to spend ten years with the company and become manager of the production and scenario department of the studio's new Tanagawa production house. He was among those to force Nikkatsu's long-time president to resign in a plan to break the company's "feudalistic" practices. The new president then began a complete renovation by firing a number of people. In the midst of all the commotion Nagata resigned. Apart from the fact that he was displeased with the firing of veteran personnel, he was also embarrassed when the new president found fault with a narration he had written for a film and

disapproved of sudden dictates to do a film "in 20 days and eight-thousand feet" without consideration of other factors. These were the reasons Nagata offered the newspapers.

Nikkatsu told the print media a different story, saying that Nagata had resigned because he had heard that the studio was investigating the report of his having accepted a bribe. According to Nikkatsu accounts, it was later "proved" that Nagata had received a \$20 thousand bribe from Shochiku to sabotage production at Nikkatsu's new Tokyo studios. Amid all the money talk it was ascertained that a part of the sum needed for forming Dai-Ichi Eiga came from an exclusive English school for children of the Kyoto elite run by Nagata's wife, but just where the remainder came from went undetermined. Dai-Ichi Eiga would fall in 1936 and with it all of Shochiku's hopes of establishing its own tightly controlled distribution system.

The year 1941 arrived, darkened by a governmental decree that the ten major Japanese film companies merge into two. The consolidation was a war-time maneuver designed to make easier industry control. As raw film stock was a war material, its availability to the studios depended on their making the kind of pictures the state required. The announcement created much maneuvering as industry personnel foresaw the possibility of arbitrary advancement or demotion.

Masaichi Nagata claimed that the two-film-companies plan as designed by Shiro Kido, head of Shochiku, was a means to consolidate his personal power and Shochiku's strength. This statement endeared Nagata to certain members of the filmmaking community who opposed the govern-

BY GREG SHOEMAKER



ment plan, and they elected him to head a countermeasure committee since, it was thought, as a Kyoto man he could take a more argumentative attitude than the Tokyo people who had come into daily contact with the government's Office of Public Information. Nagata gladly accepted for under the original two-company plan the Shinko Kyoto studios which he now headed would be closed, leaving him unemployed.

In his memoirs Shiro Kido confirmed the rivalry between himself and Nagata, saying that the latter was in chronic fear of being subordinate to someone and had disliked being under Kido. "It was mostly fate, not talent, that made Nagata big."

To back up his dislike for the consolidation plan of the government, Nagata offered up an alternative that would create three companies instead of two. The Office of Public Information quickly realized that this new, third company, composed of firms with weak management, would have no established executive staff to oppose government policy, providing the Office with major control over a new company that would be truly "semi-official." Nagata's plan was quickly ratified, and almost everyone was content.

The exception was Kyusaku Hori, head of Nikkatsu. His studio, Shinko and Daiei were to be combined to form Daiei (Da-Nihon Eiga, or The Greater Japan Motion Picture Company), which would make Nikkatsu include its large chain of theatres in the merger without receiving equivalent credit for these assets as the merger was to be made in terms of production facilities alone. In an attempt to salvage his own company, Hori earned the displeasure of the higher powers. When the time arrived to join assets, Nikkatsu was purposely undervalued, while Shinko was padded to the extent that it became the dominant company in the combine. Shinko's new head found his firm now with the real power, and he himself consequently in the top position. The company head was, of course, Masachi Nagata. Because the board could not decide on a president, Managing Director Nagata willingly took on the extra duties in 1942.

Nikkatsu did not become completely dissipated for Kyusaku Hori was allowed to retain Nikkatsu as a theatre-holding company. This consolation left Daiei with plenty of studios but without any theatres except those few brought in by Shinko and Daiei.

Other problems surfaced. With Shochiku tying up the women's audience and Toho appealing to the urban audience, only the farmers and children remained for the new Daiei. With its first few films failing to make money, the studio relied on capital funds loaned from another film company.

Following the first success of a Daiei film, *NEW SNOW*, the police arrested Nagata. The Home Ministry, issuer of the warrant and traditional rival of the Office of Public Information, accused Nagata of bribing the Information Office to have his three-company plan accepted. Nagata denied the charge and was released within fifty days to the sorrow of others in the film industry.

World War II ended, and Japan was kept in tow by the Occupation Forces led by Douglas MacArthur. The hunting of "war criminals" was a task that kept the Occupation busy, even in the realm of the filmmaking industry where a list of suspects was drawn up by the Japan Motion Picture and Drama Employees Union, a communist organization often at odds with management. Among those on the list was Nagata who was removed for "rehabilitation." The process completed in 1948, Nagata was fully reinstated, busy with big plans and bigger ideas.

As youngest of the pre-war companies, Daiei emerged into the post-war era without a chain of theatres, and since it had been organized at a time when distribution was in the hands of a monopoly, there was no opportunity to line up contracted theatres. Additionally, the firm, having been faithful to the numerous demands of the military until the end of the war, was without pictures to be screened, since almost all of its productions were condemned by the Occupation because of feudal or anti-democratic content. Lacking contracts with most of the top costume-picture stars, Daiei's hands were tied so far as period-films were concerned. With the Occupation Forces frowning on these pictures, the Kyoto branch of Daiei, which had specialized in just this sort of film, was virtually closed.

To regain a foothold in the business, Daiei approached Toho with a distribution tie-up scheme as the company was now very much in favor of a two-company industry. Shochiku objected so strongly that the project was dropped.

Without the luxury of big stars on its payroll, the company began to exploit sensationalism in its films:





kissing scenes, adultery, eroticism. One of the most ingenious of the post-war kisses occurred in Daiei's BRILLIANT REVENGE, which apparently for the purpose of including a kiss, inserted a scene showing Tolstoy's Resurrection being performed on the stage. In this play within a film there could be nothing objectionable since the Japanese involved were playing foreigners, and everyone knew that foreigners kiss in public.

Nagata became the first member of the industry to leave Japan since the end of the war. Returning from the United States he decided that his country must enter international festivals as soon as possible, the incentive for this decision stemming from a remark made to him during his visit to America: "Are movies made in Japan, too?"

In the meantime, at the urging of the Venice Film Festival sponsors, Giuliana Stranigoli, head of the Italifilm branch in Japan, viewed a number of possible Japanese entries and took a definite liking to one Daiei film because of its "strangeness." The film was RASHOMON.

Sometime before, Nagata, who had more or less accidentally signed a one-year distribution and production contract with Akira Kurosawa, was approached by the director to make RASHOMON. Nagata objected to Kurosawa's offer, holding that the story was too offbeat. Kurosawa campaigned heavily and Nagata relented, but with many objections since it was his money that the director would be using.

(In the Japanese film industry operating under the "director system" of hierarchy, the head of the studio, or very often the head of the company, as in the case of Daiei's Nagata, was the active director of policy as to what kind of pictures were to be produced. Responsibility for delegating details to a producer was not exercised. The director was held responsible for everything in a film and reported directly to the head of production. A producer under the system was little more than an errand boy, since the two powers, director and studio chief, held all the responsibility.)

When RASHOMON began to take an overly long period of time to complete, Nagata was interested in making several cheap quickies to fill up the schedule. He was approached by Kaneto Shindo and Konisaburo Yoshimura with a screenplay they had completed. Yoshimura: "...because of his worrying over RASHOMON, Nagata came to like me, and at

Daiei if Nagata likes you everything is all right."

Miss Stranigoli informed Nagata that RASHOMON ought to go to Venice, but he hesitated to agree. He was afraid of failure and the consequent humiliation, and worst of all, the fact that the film had not been made "especially for export." This being the era when Westerners' opinions were listened to, Nagata reluctantly took the plunge.

To everyone's surprise RASHOMON won, and Nagata was forced into greatness. It was a stroke of luck, and luck was something which both Nagata and Daiei needed. With the industry facing a double demand in 1953, that of the home audience and that of interested foreigners, there was such turmoil and not a little discussion. One of the few involved who knew what was going on was Masachichi Nagata. Clearly seeing the possibilities of both markets, he set off to do something about them.

For some time Daiei had been experimenting with Japanese-made color film, but found it severely lacking in quality. Because of this Nagata turned to Eastmancolor and, although the film was still in a somewhat experimental stage, sent two of his people to America to make tests. The move was inspired both by his seeing that color would be the coming thing and by his desire to break even further into the international market.

The investigations amply paid off. GATE OF HELL was released in 1953 and proved the answer to Nagata's every prayer. The film was ordinary enough for the home market and exotic enough for the foreign market. What made GATE OF HELL important even more was its incorporation of the most beautiful color photography ever to grace the screen up to that time.

Now definitely on top, Daiei set what shortly was to become a pattern, representing as it did the perfect compromise between the exoticism which the studio believed the West hungered for and the mediocrity which it was thought that Japan would happily consume. The industry was elated. The days of big business were finally here.

GATE OF HELL went on to win the 1954 Grand Prize at Cannes and a year later an American Academy Award. But the Japanese critics were completely confounded by the foreign success of the film since it made no one's "best ten" list in 1953 in Japan, and their attitude was that of the insulted and injured since these foreigners seemed to suggest that the Japanese critics did not know their business. Many were the articles suggesting this





and claiming that Japan had suffered a national insult. One critic pointed out that "in the same way, foreigners, forever souvenir-hunting, always pick Japanese-style paintings on silk rather than our oils on canvas." Dai-ichi, however, was not complaining.

Dai-ichi then launched a regular program of color-film production and thus became the first Japanese company to go in for color on more than an experimental basis.

Evaluating the international market, Nagata decided that the success of his films overseas lay in their exoticism, and he therefore decided on more large-scale period-films. Little-by-little, however, it became abundantly clear that Nagata was wrong. His policy of producing period-films "that appeal to foreigners" was disastrous.

In 1955 Nagata learned the extent of his misery. He failed to win anything abroad, and the films in question, apart from not selling in foreign countries, had only moderate success in Japan because of their poor quality, not because they were made for export.

This concentration of resources on a few films for foreigners resulted in a neglect of Dai-ichi's weekly bread-and-butter products and a consequent fall in their overall quality. Too, despite Dai-ichi's frequent announcements claiming sole concentration on "big, quality pictures," due in part to Nagata's disdain to the double-features policy set by several of the other studios and his reasoning that there was bigger opportunity for making money on a film that was successful abroad than on the biggest films at home, Dai-ichi's actual output showed an almost total concern with slickly-made, but essentially trite adaptations of fiction appearing in second-rate magazines.

The company's more constructive efforts in this period were the introduction of the color film and the persuasion of other producers to turn their eyes to markets abroad. Dai-ichi also served as example in this time frame of how not to make a co-production. The other companies, profiting by Dai-ichi's two failures when the studio used an American director on one film and film star Margaret O'Brien in the other, decided to embark on a few collaborations of their own.

Despite its co-production failures, Dai-ichi was anxious to try again. This time it looked to Hong Kong and interested the Shaw Brothers, to the extent of their putting up thirty percent of the money, the result being THE PRIN-

CESS YANG (YOHKI), a rather dull if pictorially beautiful reworking of Chinese history. Box-office returns were not impressive, but at least Dai-ichi received the dubious prestige of having made another foreign co-production.

A division of the market into six spheres assured each major company (Toho, Dai-ichi, Shochiku, the recently formed Toei and Shintoho companies, plus Nikkatsu, the latter back in production) its own private share and a presumably loyal audience, and had as one of its effects a partial removal of inter-company rivalry, hampering greatly the healthy principle of competition. Dai-ichi sought out the teenage audience with its youth films, erotic or otherwise, also making period-dramas which particularly appealed to the city storekeepers.

While the policy of division was successful in allowing each company to attract the type of audience it wanted, it was never completely rigid. Each studio made many films which naturally included audiences not within its sphere of influence. In general, however, the result of this striving for security within the industry was a complete commercialization of the film product.

Though Dai-ichi had produced the first Japanese science fiction film in 1949, THE TRANSPARENT MAN, it wasn't until Toho issued GODZILLA in 1954 that the genre took off. Eager for a piece of the action, Dai-ichi produced a SF number for the foreign market titled SPACEMEN APPEAR IN TOKYO which in full color, missing in the Toho effort, solemnly warned against the threat of an invading asteroid, advising unilateral cooperation to and the threat. Foreigners never saw the film theatrically since Dai-ichi was unable to sell it to anyone, but the company was able to distribute the picture to American television under its own auspices nine years later as WARNING FROM SPACE. The film was eventually picked up by American International Television, along with most of Dai-ichi's monster films, for television distribution in the latter sixties.

Perhaps even more typical of the commercialization of the Japanese films was the fad of the taiyozoku movies during the summer of 1956. The concept of the taiyozoku (literally, "sun tribe") was often credited to Shintaro Ishihara for his short novel Season of the Sun, a violent, adolescent outcry against tradition and the older generation. It is this theme which was soon taken up by the young people whose anarchistic ideas allowed them to think themselves members of the taiyozoku.





Though the novels based on this concept aroused little public resentment, the films did. Daiji was unsympathetic. Seeing the *taizozoku* pictures as a logical extension of its erotic films for teenagers, it was delighted to note that its film, *PUNISHMENT ROOM*, about sex and lawless youth, was playing to standing-room-only from morning to night because of its attractiveness to female high school students.

Besides sex, war and science fiction, another favored exploitation theme in commercial Japanese cinema was the use of exotic and foreign locales. Daiji's *THE PRINCESS YANG* being an example. But Daiji went further afield to shoot its *BURBA* in Hollywood in an "African Jungle" set since the story was about a Japanese Tarzan.

Period-dramas meanwhile, in the manner of Hollywood's western, proved the most stable and sure of all. Yet, it too was undergoing transformation now that Toei, with its serious, short feature-length period-films, was setting the profit-making, though critics were of the opinion that Daiji was making the more competent period-pictures. One of the reasons was that Daiji had both Teinosuke Kinugasa and Daisuke Ito who could turn out commercial products better than others in the field. In addition, Kenji Mizoguchi's highly creative experiments in the area of the period-film helped considerably to raise Daiji's reputation.

(A businessman's businessman, Masaichi Nagata nevertheless, was always overwhelmed by genuine artists, being fascinated by both then and their work. Despite his reputation as a maker of the most uninteresting and most financially successful of pot-boilers, Nagata had always liked to use his commercial talents to help men of genius, hence his long association with Mizoguchi and his continuing support to provide that director with everything he needed to make good films.)

In the sixties Daiji found its money-makers to be the works of Yasuzo Masumura, whose style relied upon shock editing, sensationalism and eroticism, and the popular series about Zatoichi the blind swordsman for mainstream audiences. In the area of fantasy and horror the studio found acceptance in its many supernatural films and two series featuring giant monsters, one about a huge, avenging stone idol which comes to life (3 films) and the other about a fire-belching, gargantuan turtle (6 films) whose first film finds him in simply a monster-on-the-

loose premise, but who later became a sort of accidental savior of mankind.

In December, 1971 it all ceased to exist. Daiji declared bankruptcy amid a number of suspicions and accusations which occurred in a "bloody" climate of corruption in management over money and political involvement.

The lengthy bankruptcy battle continued into 1972. In April the bankruptcy administrator for the defunct company sued the four executives of the insolvent firm, including president Masaichi Nagata, for approximately \$1.6 million in damages compensation. According to the suit filed with the Tokyo District Court, the four executives had made illegal disbursements in donations to political groups and other accounts beyond the company's normal business activities and incurred losses to the studio until it went bankrupt December 23, 1971.

Daiji was revived in the summer of 1974 under the presidency of newspaper publisher Yasuyoshi Tokuna. The Daiji parent company now had four subsidiaries, one of which dealt exclusively with distribution, a second with production, and the remaining two operated studios in Tokyo and Kyoto. Additionally, there was an affiliated company, Toko Tokuna Co. which specialized in the import of Chinese films and the export of Japanese films to China.

The studio produced 8 motion pictures from the time of its revival up through 1978, one of which was an occult thriller called *YOGA*, co-produced by former president Masaichi Nagata, a man obviously unfazed by all his legal uncertainties and for whom supposed offenses appeared to be lacking substance, and distributed by Shochiku. The studio for which Nagata had worked some 43 years earlier and would later disown to form Daiji. The circle, it seemed, would never be unbroken.



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Reprinted from an article which appeared in *Caper* magazine (circa 1982, author unknown), the following represents only a portion of the pantheon that is Ejiri's. Liberties have been taken with respect to the copy--Editor.

EJIRI TSUBURAYA

The mild-looking gentleman below has H-bombed Paris, destroyed Tokyo, changed the orbit of the Earth and created many monsters. He is Ejiri Tsuburaya, and his intimates are dragons and ogres, men from outer space and denizens of the never-never land of folklore. He has lived in a world of fantasy all his adult life, but this escape from reality, far from being a personality aberration, has amounted to the secret of his success. And when he turns to the reconstruction of actual events or the prediction of possible realities, this flair for the fantastic and the unimaginable continues to stand him in good stead. Japan's (and probably the world's) top special effects filmmaker, Tsuburaya has enchanted and terrified millions with his own brand of cinematic magic. He has used optical devices, painstaking miniatures and oversize models to make the impossible easy and the fanciful real.

When history (as in the controversial *I BOMBED PEARL HARBOR*) or legend doesn't provide him with a challenging subject, Ejiri lets his fertile imagination take over. He has been responsible for some of your favorite monsters: Godzilla, Rodan, the Mysterians and Mothra.

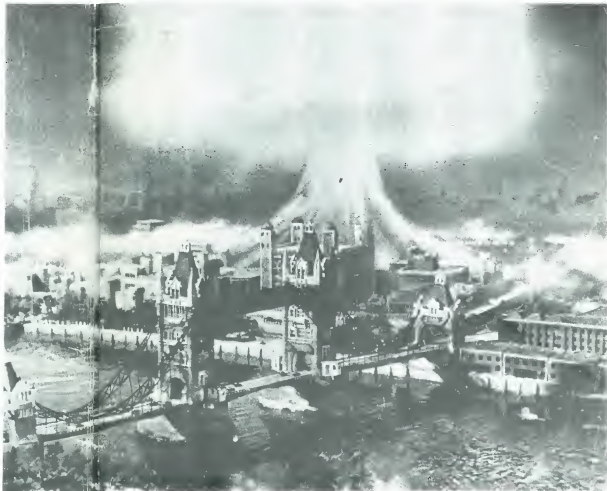
Perhaps the most spectacular of all Tsuburaya's productions is *THE LAST WAR*, unshown theatrically in the U.S. and only recently released to television. In this grim visualization of the future, all the ingenuity of Tsuburaya's scale-model work is used to depict the possible consequences of a large-scale nuclear accident involving bombs 1,000 times more destructive than the one that fell on Hiroshima. The Empire State Building goes crashing down as a 20-megaton H-bomb hits New York. The Arch of Triumph cracks like a toy. The last building in Tokyo sinks into a river of lava and a huge cloud sucks up the remains of a totally devastated London. The producers say they put \$80,000 into the realms of the world's great cities in order to perfect this "appeal to the world" showing "exactly what will happen if this colossal horror befalls us." What is notable is that this film is not just horrible, but strangely beautiful. This is characteristic of Ejiri Tsuburaya's work as a whole, not all of which is concerned with the catastrophic.

A small, shy person with lively, humorous eyes, Tsuburaya says: "My heart and mind are as they were when I was a child. Then I loved to play with toys and to read stories of magic. I still do. My wish is only to make life happier and more beautiful for those who will go and see my films of fantasy."

Ejiri says he was ten when he saw a toy film viewer in a shop window. By filching coins every few days from the cash box in his father's shop, he was eventually able to buy the machine. Once he owned it, however, he realized he could not be seen using it, since questions about the purchase were sure to have painful repercussions. So he took the projector apart, studied its construction and then destroyed it. With bits of wire, pasteboard tubes and a box he built his own projector from scratch. He even drew the pictures on a strip of paper and tediously punched holes for the sprockets. The resulting machine and "film" not only worked but so amazed his family that the original crime, now discovered, was overlooked. Half a century later, Ejiri Tsuburaya is still doing remarkable reconstructions.



THE FINAL WAR (Toho, 1961). Below: Director Tsuburaya rests between takes. Bottom: Against a backdrop of an atomic cloud, propmen set a miniature freighter adrift on the studio "sea." Right: London, an exquisitely detailed miniature, is soon to be destroyed.



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SUBURAYA





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GHIDRAH ON FILM

TOM ROGERS

As many of JFFJ's readers undoubtedly know, Ghidrah is a fat, three-headed invader from outer space. He's sort of a space dragon, and instead of breathing fire and smoke, he exudes lightning bolts from any or all of his three heads. Like many of Toho's giant creatures, he can also fly (even Godzilla can propel himself through the air, as we witnessed in GODZILLA VS. THE SMOG MONSTER); he has two huge wings that somewhat resemble those of a bat, and he employs them quite well. However, he never seems to fly very fast. Rodan can certainly fly rings around the tri-headed monster, despite his apparent sluggishness (he is, after all, quite lumpy).

Unlike most of Toho's dinosaur-types, Ghidrah acts as a loner. Perhaps he just doesn't fit in with Earth monsters because he doesn't speak their language (according to Toho, all monsters speak the same language; I'm just relating their opinions, so don't hold it against me). Whatever the reason, Ghidrah is one (three) nasty guy(s).

The space dragon was first shown in GHIDRAH, THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER (1965). He came to Earth inside a gigantic meteor that fell in a secluded area of Japan. After a while, the meteor became extremely magnetic, and before long it exploded—unleashing Ghidrah upon this monster-plagued world of ours. Amid a fantastic display of special effects, the alien was formed in mid-air, and once again Earth seemed doomed.

While Ghidrah was being formed in his dynamic fashion, Godzilla and Rodan were fighting each other in an

area not far away. Like the callous creatures that they were, the two monsters were tearing up the countryside. Naturally, if anything or anybody got in their way, they smashed it. In those days, they didn't care about humans (who, to them, were like ants are to us). Anyway, the only surviving Mothra came crawling along (this one hadn't turned into a moth yet) and tried to convince Godzilla and Rodan that they should help mankind against the intergalactic menace that had once destroyed the civilization of Mars (complicated, isn't it?). At first, the giants refused, but Mothra managed to shame them into fighting Ghidrah. After a lengthy battle, the three good monsters managed to defeat the bad one(s). At the film's climax, Ghidrah went flying off into the distance--headed for who knows where?

Soon afterward, Ghidrah returned as MONSTER ZERO (also known as INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER). This time around, Earth got to be invaded by a race of beings from the Planet X. The dragon had flown there after his defeat at the hands of the good monsters, and was now taking it tough for the inhabitants there. The aliens made contact with Earth, and then transported Godzilla and Rodan to their world to fight Ghidrah. After the good guys won, the outsiders gained control over all three beasts and then attack Earth. Thanks to the heroic actions of Nick Adams and a Japanese astronaut, the control over "our" dinosaurs was broken and Godzilla and Rodan immediately turned against the three-headed creep. Another long, drag-out fight resulted in Ghidrah's defeat, and our military forces succeeded in eliminating the invaders by using a special sonic device. We won again, but now Ghidrah was really angry because he had been beaten again--this time by only two opponents!

In 1969, the order went out to all Earth units to DESTROY ALL MONSTERS. This was because another race of aliens--Kilaaks--had gained mastery over all of our world's monsters and turned them against us. Like the X-ites, these creatures wanted to conquer our race. The Japanese dinosaurs were forced to attack every major city on Earth, against their wills. This lasted throughout most of the film, but finally the good guys managed to destroy the enemy's moonbase and free the creatures! We win. Then our over-sized heroes, led by Godzilla, banded together and ganged up on poor old Ghidrah and the invaders. As soon as the space dragon was beaten into the ground, all of the monsters attacked the aliens' base on Earth, while some of our fearless astronauts battled a super-saucer. By the time the end credits came on, all of the foes had been vanquished.

The last time that Ghidrah showed up was in GODZILLA VS. GIGAN. This time, the three-headed one teamed with another space beast, Gigan, at the request of--can you guess?--invading aliens from a distant planet. The invaders were using an amusement park as a front, but this was discovered by the end of the movie. While Ghidrah and pudgy Gigan were busy smashing everything within sight, Godzilla and Anguirus decided to put an end to the destruction. After a long and humorous battle, Godzilla and his companion won out over the dinosaurs from outer space. Ghidrah and his alien manipulators were defeated, but the three-headed dragon will undoubtedly return in a future Godzilla film.

Unlike most Japanese monsters, Ghidrah doesn't appear to have any sort of personality. He seems to only want to destroy things. Even though he was under the command of alien invaders in three of his four films, he always looked as though he enjoyed his work. We mustn't forget that most of Toho's dinosaurs were evil in the beginning, but then changed somewhere along the way; however, I doubt if they will alter Ghidrah's manner. In my opinion, he is the most dynamic of Toho's beast stars. Not only is he nasty, but we get to see some special effects in action whenever he shows up. If he ever did join the good guys, then our Monster Army would be invincible--and we can't let that happen, can we? If they become so powerful, then who could possibly challenge them? Ghidrah, stay the way you are. We love you in spite of yourself.



THE SUPERHERO

Addenda to Part One

Last issue's presentation of "The Superhero: Japan's Interpretation," while accurate in its analysis of the respective films included in the period 1957 through 1964, had a disproportionate amount of inaccuracies in regards to film information. As author of the piece in question, I would like to apologize for the errors. Had I known I was misrepresenting the facts, the article would not have appeared until more data could have been collected. This piece, then, is to correct many, but not all, of those errors, with grateful appreciation to two individuals, Horacio Higuchi and Roger Allison.

Japanese superhero comics appeared much earlier than I surmised, possibly as far back as the late forties, an example being from Shonen, a monthly publication for teenagers, which presented the adventures in '48 or '49 of "Tetsuwan Atomu," an android boy later to appear in animated form for television as ASTROBOY, the creative artist for the strip being Osamu Tezuka. Robots arrived in the comic strip media in the early fifties, e.g., "Tetsujin Nijū-hachigō" ("Iron Man No. 28," becoming GIGANTOR when changed to a televised cartoon series) and the humorous "Robotto Santo-hei" ("Buck Private Robot, Third Class"), the latter possibly having been issued earlier than stated here. Such non-robot characters in evidence in the mid-fifties were Jiro Tsunoda's fantastic masked heroes, "Gekko Kamen" ("Man in the Moonlight Mask") and "Maboroshi Tantei" ("Detective Spectre") which appeared in screen versions after their genesis in comic strips, the latter also popularized in a radio serial. At this point, Mr. Higuchi would like to ask if any Japanese-born readers would care to shed light upon the origins of the superheroes. Well?

In the "Man in the Moonlight Mask" film series, I have the following information:

- (1) MAN IN THE MOONLIGHT MASK (Toei; 1958); Director: Tsuneo Koyayoshi; Screenplay: Yasuhiro Kawachi; Photography: Ichiro Hoshiyama; Starring: Funikake Omura, Junya Usami, Hiroko Hime, Mitsue Komaya; Running time: 105 mins.
- (2) THE MONSTER GORILLA (Toei; 1959); Director: Satoru Akindō; Starring: Funikake Omura, Yaeo Mahanigui; Running time: 80 mins.
- (3) THE CHALLENGING GHOST (Toei; 1959); Director: Shoichi Shinazu; Starring: Funikake Omura.
- (4) THE LAST DEATH OF THE DEVIL (Toei; 1959); Director: Shoichi Shinazu; Starring: Funikake Omura.

Regarding the "Super Giant" series I have come across the following:

- (1) KOTETSU NO KYOJIN--SUPA JYAIANTSU (THE STEEL GIANT--SUPER GIANT); 49 minutes; released July 30, 1957
- (2) ZOKU KOTETSU NO KYOJIN--SUPA JYAIANTSU (FOLLOW-UP TO THE ADVENTURES OF THE STEEL GIANT--SUPER GIANT); 52 minutes; released August 16, 1957
- (3) KOTETSU NO KYOJIN--SUPA JYAIANTSU: KAI-

(continued on next page)

THE SUPERHERO

Addenda to Part One

(continued from preceding page)

SEIJIN NO MAJO (THE STEEL GIANT--SUPER GIANT: THE EVIL CASTLE OF THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET PEOPLE); 48 minutes; released October, 1957

(4) KOTETSU NO KYOJIN--SUPA JYAIANTSU: CHIKYU MITSUBO SUNZEN (THE STEEL GIANT--SUPER GIANT: THE EARTH WILL BE ANNIHILATED SOON); 39 minutes; released October 8, 1957

(5) SUPA JYAIANTSU: JINKO EISEI TO JINRUI NO HAMETSU (SUPER GIANT: THE SATELLITES AND THE DESTRUCTION OF HUMANITY); 39 minutes; released December 28, 1957

(6) SUPA JYAIANTSU: UCHUSEN TO JINKO EISEI NO GEKITOTSU (SUPER GIANT: THE SPACESHIP AND THE SATELLITES IN DUEL); 39 minutes; released January 3, 1958

(7) SUPA JYAIANTSU: UOHU KAJJIN SHUTSUGEN (SUPER GIANT: MYSTERIOUS SPACEMEN APPEAR); 45 minutes; released April 28, 1958

(8) ZOKU SUPA JYAIANTSU (DAI HACHIBU): AKUMA NO KESHIN (FURTHER ADVENTURES OF SUPER GIANT (CHAPTER EIGHT): DEVIL INCARNATE); 57 minutes; released March 27, 1959

(9) ZOKU SUPA JYAIANTSU (DAI KYUBU): DOKUGA OOKOKU (FURTHER ADVENTURES OF SUPER GIANT (CHAPTER NINE): KINGDOM OF THE VENOMOUS MOTH); 57 minutes; released April 24, 1959.

The first six films formed a independent, two-part stories, and were directed by Teruo Ishii. The English titles found in Japanese press sheets are: (1) THE STEELMAN FROM OUTER SPACE, (2) RESCUE FROM OUTER SPACE, (3) INVADERS FROM THE PLANETS, (4) THE EARTH IN DANGER, (5) THE SINISTER SPACE-SHIPS, (6) THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SPACE-FLEET. The last three films were independent entities: (7) was directed by Akira Mima, (8) and (9) by Choji Akasaka.

Most sources give the same staff and cast for the entire series which is incorrect. For example, the leading ladies were different for each story: Junko Ikeuchi, (1) and (2); Minako Yamada, (3) and (4); Utako Mitsuwa, (5) and (6); Chisako Takara, (7); Reiko Seto, (8); Terumi Hoshi, (9). The photographer for (8) and (9) was Kiminobu Okada; the composer, Sadao Nagase. Kinema Junpo lists (8) as being the only film of the series in color.

American title correspondents: ATOMIC RULERS OF THE WORLD, (1) and (2); INVADERS FROM SPACE, (3) and (4); ATTACK FROM SPACE, (5) and (6); EVIL BRAIN FROM OUTER SPACE, (7).

French title compilations: L'INVINCIBLE SPACEMAN (85 minutes; #1 and #2); L'ATTAQUE DES SOUCOUPIES VOLANTES (85 minutes; #3 and #4); SPACEMEN CONTRE SATELLITES (85 minutes; #5 and #6).

Much of the "Super Giant" data is in direct contradiction to several American references, but the information printed herein is directly from Japanese sources, and as such should be considered correct. If additional information is uncovered on the superhero film between the years 1957 through 1964, it will appear in a similar article next issue.

GREG SHOEMAKER



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Above: Sparked by the renewed interest in Kong via the Paramount remake, the Toei teletseries, KING KONG, is currently in rerelease by Worldvision Enterprises, Inc. The series sports 48 color episodes, each approx. 8 minutes long and one 50 minute show broken up into two 25 minute segments. Below: The original American ad campaign for Toho's GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA (1974). Film has undergone title change to GODZILLA VS. COSMIC MONSTER due to STAR WARS acceptance. Cinema Shares' ability to market films along current trends would seem to be an asset.

SEE THE MIGHTY GODZILLA IN
A FIGHT TO THE DEATH
WITH HIS BIONIC DOUBLE!



CINE-VA SHARE'S
**GODZILLA
VS.
BIONIC MONSTER**

Distributed by
CINE-VA SHARE'S INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION CORP.

PG

ALSO IN EAST REPORT

1972 Two Toei episodes in the further adventures of their superhero product were released on March 18. **SPECTERMAN** (*SUPERKID-HUMAN*), 25 minutes long, continued the monster vs. Earth story. **MASKED RIDER VS. SHOCKER** (*KAMEN RAIDA VS. SHOKKA*), direction by Minoru Yoneda and a 32 minute length, featured Masked Rider's attempt to counter the ragings of the mad Shocker. Toei also produced the cartoon featurette **DO GET THEM GO! LINDERS** (*MAKEN RAIDA ZERO-ZERO-WAN-WAN RENSHIN SEI*), depicting the transformation of dogs into fighting machines. Tsutomu and his four pet canines fight against monsters who plot to make inroads upon the Earth. Released July 16, the 50 minute film was directed by Takeshi Tamura. (The characters' code number is a pun in Japanese, as "wan-wan" means something like "bow-wow")... With distribution by Toho, Tsuburaya Production's continued success in the superhero field was evident in the release of another **MEIRAMAN** episode on March 12 with a 25 minute running time and direction by the distinguished I-shiro Honda. Director Eizo Yamagata staged a battle between Ultraman and space monster Yadokarin, in a 48 minute Tsuburaya Productions film for the **ULTRAMAN RETURN** (*KARENTAKITA GUTSUGUNIN*) series....

1974 **MOETRA** and **MAJINDER ZERO** were reissued as a double bill on December 14 in Japan... The solution to the controversy surrounding Dai's proposed film, **SINKING OF THE JAPANESE ISLANDS**, announced prior to the studio's bankruptcy, and Toho's **SUBMERGION OF JAPAN** released in 1974, was discerned from information received regarding the purchase of all of Dai's filmic properties in the latter's bankruptcy days, one of the properties being the film rights to the novel upon which Dai's film was to be based...

1975 Kazuhiko Watanabe's puppet-animation film, **THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL**, was selected winner of the Golden Mermaid Award in the first Fairytale Film Festival in the category of "Best Hans Christian Andersen Film." The festival was organized in the native town of Andersen, Odense, Denmark, to mark the centenary of the death of Denmark's great fairytale writer on August 4, 1875. An international festival jury headed by Poland's renowned film cartoonist, Jan Lenica, chose the winning productions. During the ten-day festival, more than 12,000 children crowded into two local theatres to watch a total of 58 cartoon or puppet films from more than 20 nations...Toei fantasy output for 1975 was, as usual, considerable. They offered no less than three kiddie programs, known as *manga-matsuri* or cartoon festival, with both live-action and animated shorts. Festival No. 1 took place on March 21, which can be considered as the initial release date for the following

films, and comprised the 58 minute **AN ANDERSEN FAIRY--PRINCESS MEMOIR** (*ANDERSENEN SONG--RINGO KIMO*) with direction by Toshiharu Katsurata, animation direction by Reiko Okuyama, screenplay by Ikuko Oyabu and Meiko Oomai, and music by Tsuyokuni Hirayoshi. It was filmed in Eastman-color and ToeiScope. On the same bill: **LITTLE KITCH MEG AND THE ALICE FROM THE MOON** (*MAJINDER MEKUGAN--SUKIKORI SO SEIWA*), a 25 minute cartoon for girls directed by Hiroshi Settsuraku; **GREAT MAJINGA VS. ROBOT GETTER** (*GURETO MAJINDER TAI GETTAROBOT*), an animated superhero vs. robot tale directed by Masayuki Akabi and running 30 minutes in length; **MASKED RIDER AND THE AMAZONS** (*KAMEN RAIDA--AMAZON*), another live-action spinoff with the mutant motorcycle riding hero in a 24 minute short directed by Issaku Uchida; the 25 minute **GANGARE ROBOKON**, the first in a new series of live-action shorts involving little automaton Robokon, directed by Setsuro Okunaka; and a 16 minute color documentary, **THESE ARE THE U.P.O.'S FLYING SAUCERS** (*KOKE GA U.P.O. DAI SORATOU ENBAN*), compiled by Issai Shigeno. The second program was held on July 26, 1975. It featured two cartoons: **GREAT MAJINGA VS. ROBOT GETTER-2: THE GREAT AIR DUEL** (*GURETO MAJINDER TAI GETTAROBOT-2: KOKU DATOKUTOPUSU*), directed by Masayuki Akabi and running 25 minutes; and **WAR OF THE SPACE SAUCERS** (*UORU UNBAN DATENSOU*), directed by veteran Yugo Serikawa and running 30 minutes in length. Also presented were three live-action shorts: the 20 minute **ROBOKON AND HIS AMUSING FRIENDS** (*GANGARE ROBOKON--YUKUNA NAZAMA*), directed by Hidetoshi Kitamura; **MASKED RIDER AND THE STRONGER** (*KAMEN RAIDA--SUOSHONGA*), directed by Itaru Setsuda and running 20 minutes; and **SECRET FORCE FIVE BANGERS** (*HEIMETSU SENTAI GOSHENJA*), about a team of five masked superheroes, directed by Kazuhiko Taguchi and running 20 minutes. On December 20 the third and final festival was presented in which the following were screened: the animated **U.P.O. ROBOT GURENDALISEN** (*U.P.O. NOBO GURENDALISA*), directed by Yoichi Koso and running 24 minutes; and the live-action films, each running 24 minutes: **ONIPPOUSHI J GOLF** (*ONIPPOUSHI GOLF*) (*GANGARE ROBOKON MOTOGOLF*), directed by Hidetoshi Kitamura; **ADVENTURE-3**, a new superhero epic by Setsuro Okunaka; and **SECRET FORCE FIVE BANGERS AND THE BLUE PORTRESS** (*HEIMETSU SENTAI GOSHENJA--AOI DATOKUSA*), directed by Kazuhiko Taguchi...Toei also released several noteworthy features in 1975. The studio produced **WOLFRIDE--FUTABA**, **WOLFRAN** (*WOLFUGAI--MEIRO OGAKI OTOKO*), a strange science fiction/karate adventure whose hero has inherited "the power of the wolves" and becomes invincible when the moon is full, here fighting a murderous organization which literally rips off its victims by means of an invisible "mental tiger" commanded by a girl with E.S.P. The film, directed by Kazuhiko Yanaguchi with a running time of 86 minutes, was released on May 4, 1975.

MONSTER AGAINST MONSTER FOR THE LOST CONTINENT OF MU!



The same director was also responsible for *CAT-MONSTER OF THE TURKISH BATH* (KALITO TORURUBU) which blended the traditional cat-monster theme, *nake-nake*, with the erotic surroundings of a massage parlor and which starred porno star Naomi Tani as the werewolf/masseuse who gets revenge on her murderous gigolo. The film was released January 29, 1975 and ran 81 minutes. *THE BULLET TRAIN* (SHINKANSEN DAI KAKURA), released July 5, was a cleverly plotted disaster thriller from Toei, the "Bullet Train" being the super-express that runs between Tokyo and Hakata, Kyushu. The story concerned a bomb threat by a group demanding \$5 million that would place 1,500 passengers on board the "Hikari 100" in grave danger. If the train's speed is reduced to under 80 kilometers per hour, the bombs would explode. "Actions of the borders, the railroad interests and the police investigators are vividly described in parallel. Very skillful use of both the real train and miniatures contributes to the thrill and excitement. Director Junya Sato's direction has surpassed mere cleverness and created one of the most successful Japanese films in recent years." (Mizu, Variety, July 30, 1975.) Screenplay: Ryunosuke Ono, Junya Sato; Original story: Asei Kato; Photography (color): Masahiko Iimura; Sound: Kenzo Inoue; Art direction: Shuichiro Nakamura; Editor: Osamu Tanaka; Assistant director: Akihisa Okamoto; Starring Ken Takakura, Shinichi Chiba, Kei Yamamoto, Ken Utsui, Tetsuro Tanba; Running time: 155 minutes. Takakura took best actor award at the 3-day 22nd Asian Film Festival held in Pusan, Korea in June, 1976... *MSCBAGODZILLA'S REVENGE*, whose special effects were directed by Teruyoshi Nakano, former assistant director to Eiji Tsuburaya, saw release March 15, 1975. Also billed with the feature was a 14 minute cartoon, *RAJINE NINGEN-GAYAT-RIZU*, directed by Eiji Okabe. The color short was involved with a cyborg family and a giant monster...

1976 Yoichi Takabayashi, who has come up through experimental and underground films to achieve international prominence in 1973 when his *THE MURDER WAS SO CLEAR* was chosen for the Critics' Week in Cannes and then won the Grand Prix at Mannheim, has filmed "...his third feature, *MURDER AT AN OLD MANSION*, a bloody tale (which includes a bit of sleuthing to unravel a har-kari compulsion on the part of the aging, intellectual bridegroom. Despite some decent lensing, and a good twist in a conventional story, pic never gets off the ground and is hampered by stereotypical roles and dull thesp. performances. The final reconstruction of the murders allows for a detailed blood bath aimed at commercial auds. with a yen for this kind of violence. The psychological dimension, rather than detective rhetoric, is missing to make pic a winner." (Holl., Variety, July 14, 1976.) (*ROMANIN SATSUNIN JIKEN*)—Producer: Yoichi Takabayashi; Original story: Seishi Yokomizo (novel); Screenplay and direction: Yoichi Takabayashi; Photography: Fujito Morita; Music: Nobuhiko Obayashi; Art direction: Yoshirobu Nishioka; Filmed in color; Running 106 minutes; Released: 1976... *GODZILLA*, *RODAN* and *MOTHRA*, all from Toho, were reissued in Japan on December 18. Also re-issued in 1976 were Toho's 4-part horror anthology, *KALIDAN* (1965), and on a triple bill engagement, Toei's horror efforts *GHOST OF CHIDORI SWAMP* (1956), *GHOST STORY OF RANCHO MANSION* (1957), and *GHOST OF OJIMA* (1961)... The trend of sex and fantasy followed into 1976 with at least two films: Toei's *FEMALE NINJA TECHNIQUE—TWO-FOLD GATE* (*OTO-MO-ICHI NINPO—KANNON HIRAKI*), an erotic yam with a double entendre title, directed by Takayuki Minakawa and released on February 14, and running 66 minutes in length; and Nikkatsu's 76 minute, bizarre, sadistic thriller, *JANBURO NO BANPOSSA* (*SCHOLAR IN THE ATTIC*), based on a novel by Ranpo Edogawa upon whose works were also based *HORROR OF THE MALFORMED MEN* (*KALIDAN KINGI NINGEN*) and *THE BLIND BEAST* (*ONJUTU*), both 1969 releases, and directed by

GIANT AGAINST GIANT... the ultimate battle!



Top: American pre-release advertising for *GODZILLA VS. MEGALON*. Note the "R" rating. Bottom: Advertising campaign eventually used which bears a striking resemblance to the ad campaign for the *KING KONG* remake.

Hoboru Tanaka for a June 12 release...On November 13 Toho released *THE INUGAMES (INUGAMI KE NO ICHIKU)*, a tale of weird murder cases, directed by the gifted Kon Ichikawa and scored by Yūji Ōno. Produced by Haruki Kadokawa, the film was based on a best-selling novel by the famous Japanese mystery author, Seishi Yokomizo, and starred Kōji Ishizaki, Yoko Shimada, Mieko Tanikawa, Teruhiko Aoi and Rentarō Mikuni. Running a hefty 145 minutes, the film was initiator for the abundance of mystery pictures which followed due to *THE INUGAMES* incredible success...1976 was busy for Toei Co., Ltd. Short subjects: *SECRET FORCE FIVE RANGERS—ALL-IED FIERCE ATTACK (HEIMTSU SENTAI GOREN-JA—MAJIZA KE MOCHIBENKI)*, a live-action, 26 minute, color film directed by Katsumi Taguchi in which the Rangers are challenged by the Black Cross Organization, released March 20; the 25 minute *ROBOKUN'S GREAT ADVENTURE (ROBOKUN NO OADVENTURE)*, a live-action, color picture directed by Toyohiko Hatakeyama in which the robot hero Robokun rescues a friendly girl from marriage to a space pirate, released March 20; also released March 20, *D.P.O. ROBOT GURENDAISER VS. GREAT MAJIZA (U.F.O. ROBO-GURENDAISA TAI GURETO MAJIZA)*, a 27 minute, animated, color film directed by Osamu Kasai in which friendly robot Gurendaizer

sible for the March 20 release of *PUSS 'N' BOOTS—AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS (BAGAGUTSU MO RAITA NEKO—BACRITSU NICHIKAN SEKAI ISSHUN)*, a color/scope, 69 minute cartoon directed by Hiroshi Shidara. The production was a sequel to Toei's successful 1969 film, *PUSS 'N' BOOTS*, with additional material from the Jules Verne novel indicated in the film's title...

1977 Production started in April on a second series of animated shorts under the umbrella title of "World Famous Fairy Tales." This follows completion of the first 52 programs, each with lengths of 15 minutes, which are being distributed overseas through the Arthur Davis Organization. Producers of the series, World Films of Tokyo, have budgeted \$8,000 per episode...The 11th Annecy International Animation Film Festival displayed a fantasy work from Japan. Kihichiro Kawanoto's 19 minute puppet film, *DOCTOR*, "...revealed extraordinary workmanship in creating a tragedy of a thwarted woman turned into a demon to wreak vengeance on a lying pilgrim." (Gene Moskowitz; Variety; July 6, 1977)...*KING KONG VS. GODZILLA* was reissued in February in Japan to cash in on the success of Paramount's *KING KONG* in that country...The Tsuburaya Productions/Rankin-

Daryl Frost, Eagan Lloyd, Michael Carreras...*THE LAST DINOSAUR* (1977) announce their "DINO KONG" Production in Nippon...*THE LAST DINOSAUR*



Preproduction publicity for *NESSIE*, the proposed Hammer/Paradine/Toho film now in temporary limbo. Hammer still persists it will produce the picture with effects by Toho.

© Hammer Productions, Inc.

faces his ally, the Great Mazings, controlled by aliens from Vega; and the following films all released July 18, 1976: a 31 minute, color/scope animated film, *GURENDAISER, ROBOT GETTER-G, GREAT MAJIZA—BATTLE THE BIG MONSTER (GURENDAISA, GETTAROB-G, GURETO MAJIZA: KESSEN! DAIGAJU)*, directed by Masayuki Terukita, in which the 3 starring robots team up with Boss Robot, Diane PA and Venus "A," also robots, to defeat prehistoric monster Oragon-saurus; *SECRET FORCE FIVE RANGERS—BOMB HURRICANE (HEIMTSU SENTAI GORENJA—BANGMAN BUSTEN)*, a 21 minute, live-action, color film directed by Minoru Tanaka, in which the evil Black Cross Organization, threatening Japan with 5 super missiles, is defeated by the Five Rangers; a 21 minute, live-action, color presentation, *THE SHADOWSTAR (ZA KAGETSUTA)*, directed by Issaku Uchida, in which the superhero Shadowstar is pitted against Dr. Satan's creations, Spider Man, Bat Man and Tiger Girl; *SPACE TROOPMAN KRODIER (UCHU TETSUJIN KRODIER)*, a 20 minute, color, animated film directed by Koichi Takemoto, in which two "Cybaloid" robots battle invaders from the planet Tada...Apart from Toei's July 18, 1976 Japanese reissue of their *ALI BABA AND THE 40 (ANIMAL) THIEVES (ARABIAN TO JOBTER-KUNU MO TOGOKU)*, 1977, their animation studio was respon-

Bass co-production *THE LAST DINOSAUR*, telecast on ABC on February 11, 1977, obtained a rating of 25.2% and a 41% share of all television sets turned on in that time period, ranking the film number 24 for all made-for-TV movies broadcast between September 20, 1976 and September 4, 1977. The film was released in Japan as *POLAR BEAR SHIP POLAR BEAR (KOKORUJI TAKKENSEN FOGU-BOM)* on September 15, 1977. The Japanese version ran 105 minutes and was distributed by Toho...At the 23rd Asian Film Festival held in Bangkok on November 10-29, 1977, Shochiku's *THE LACE OF A GRAVESTONES* was honored with an award for "Best Art Direction" and Toho's *ROUSE* for "Best Special Effects"...Kazuhiko Matsumoto's short, animated puppet film *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* was awarded a "Silver Tin Soldier" at the 2nd fairytale Festival held at Odense, Denmark on September 13, 1977...A very interesting film program occurred at the Bungei Theatre in Tokyo at the end of 1977 featuring a compact festival of Japanese fantasy movies: *ESPY, MATANOKO AND THE B-WAN* (Dec. 19); *SUPERNOBIT #1 and #2, MAJIN AND GAMBRA* (Dec. 20); *CATASTROPHE 1989* and *SUBMERGION OF JAPAN* (Dec. 21); *GAPPA, X FROM OUTER SPACE* and *VARAN* (Dec. 22); *GOKE*; *THE SNOW MONSTER (HALF HUMAN)* and *GENOCIDE* (Dec. 23); *THE INVISIBLE AVENGER, SECRET OF THE*

TELEVISION and THE HUMAN VAPOR (Dec. 24); the following week was dominated by a more modern double-bill with THE DEVIL'S HUSBAND SONG and MOUSE... Another ranga-ratsuri from Toei premiered several films on April 27, 1977. The main attraction was a cartoon feature, WORLD'S GREATEST FAIRIES—THE SWAN PRINCE (SHAKA METSUKU DOWA—BARDCO NO OJI), directed by Takashi Abe. The event also contained the short subjects GIANT ZENGMAN CUB-BYEN (DAIYUJYUJIN HAN-GEON), directed by Minoru Yamada, a live-action short in which the title robot battles a counterpart named Brain, and SUPER BISHOPHOMINGUS ROBOT COMBATTEER V-6 (CHOUJIKU BOBO KENBUTOU "V"), an animated film directed by Tadanobu Asahi, in which the robot hero faces an alien menace awakened on Earth after a slumber of 35,000 years... Also from Toei in 1977 came the Teruo Anzai/Kanjii Anzai produced HAUNTING OF THE DOG-GOD (INUGAMI NO YATARI), previously titled WOMEN WITH THE EVIL SPIRIT (AKUREDO INUYAMA), but retitled to capitalize on the popularity of Toho's THE INUGAMI'S to which it was not related at all. Photographed by Hanjiro Nakazawa, this supernatural thriller was scripted by the film's director, Shunya Ito, who returned to the screen after a four year absence. HAUNTING starred Kyoko Kishida, Shinya Owada, Jun Izumi, Masami Hasegawa, Hideo Murota, Mizuno Suzuki, and Akiko Koyama. Also featured were Eiko Yanauchi, Mizuko Suzuki, Junya Kato, Ko Ito, Kayoko Shiraiishi, and Noburo Mitani. Art director was Tadanori Kawana; editor, Takeo Toda. Shunsuke Kikuchi did the scoring, and Takanori Konetsu engineered the sound. Toei publicity claimed the film surpassed THE EXORCIST, THE OMEN and CARRIE in their own fields...

1979 According to Tomyuiki Tanaka, executive producer for Toho, the studio is readying 3 co-productions with as many American filmmakers. The first venture proposed would be a remake of the H.G. Wells novel, The Time Machine, done in association with George Pal whose 1960 version of the story won an Academy Award for special effects. The SF project is to include such wonders as giant bees and crabs. Shooting will be handled in Japan with investment cost and profit sharing on a 50/50 basis. The second co-production, described as a horror piece, will be made with American producer Charles Youngman's Punch Productions. To be

scripted by Reuben Bercowitz, MORTAL will concern itself with a monster who appears when Mt. Fuji erupts and his eventual attacking of Tokyo in a quest for food. The final project will be another monster entry, GOZILLA VS. GARGATUA, to be co-produced with Henry G. Saperstein's UPA Pictures. "We were offered more than 5 proposals," Tanaka said, "but we decided upon the three listed."... NESSIE, the proposed \$7 million feature about the Loch Ness monster, has run into production problems but is still slated to be produced by Hammer Films of England, Euan Lloyd's Paradise Film (though without David Frost as originally planned) and Toho of Japan. Toho is scheduled to film the effects which at last report were to be accomplished to the tune of \$350,000. The script by John Starr, Bryan Forbes and Christopher Wicking was completed the last week of September, 1976. The final shooting script by Forbes, also completed, was to have gone before the cameras in May of 1978, but so far production still has not begun on what appears to be an ill-fated project... Due in the fall of 1979 is Rankin/Bass' latest J.R.R. Tolkien adaption, FRODO—THE HOBBIT II. Animation of the feature will be handled in Japan with post-production work to follow in the U.S. Produced and directed by Arthur Rankin, Jr. and Jules Bass, and scored by Maury Laws with lyrics by Jules Bass, the film will have a screenplay authored by Romeo Muller from the Tolkien books The Return of the King and The Hobbit. Rankin and Bass' animation coordinators again are Toru Hara and Tsugumobu Kubo. Voices will be provided by Orson Bean, Theodore Bikel, William Conrad, John Huston, Roddy McDowell, Theodore, and the versatile Paul Freeman...

Below left: Spectremen in a tussle with the evil, monkey-like Gori, nemesis of the steelman in his own television series. Telecast International, Inc. is presently syndicating the show to stations throughout the U.S. Below: The superhero team known as the Five Rangers. Like Spectremen, this colorful group of do-gooders has starred in a number of short films released to theatres as well as in their own teleseries. Each of the force has a different colored costume, helmet emblem, and helmet numeral. At present there is no American distributor.





MY BLOOD BELONGS TO SOMEONE ELSE (alt.: BLOOD; ORENDO CHI WA TANIN NO CHI); Produced by Shochiku Co., Ltd.; Executive producer: Kiyoshi Higuchi; Based on a novel by Yasutaka Tsutsui; Screenplay: Toshio Senda; Director: Toshio Senda; Photography: Keiji Maruyama; Music: Hiroshi Takada; Art director: Shigenori Shigetate; Recording: Kan Nakamura; Sound mixing: Kou-Byo Kow; Lighting: Lei Miyure; Editing: Yoshiji Sugawara; Assistant director: Hiwedo Oe; Sets: Katsuo Kojima; Decorations: Takeshi Machida; Costumes: Shochiku Isko Co.; Processing: Toyo Development Co.; Fighting instructor: Takamitsu Watanabe; With the cooperation of Yokohama Dreamland; Production manager: Tadashi Shibata; Assistant production manager: Junichi Mine; Starring: Shohei Kano (Ryosuke), Frankie Sakai (Rokusuke Sawamura), Etsuko Nani (Fusako), Wataru Nuchi

BLOOD

(Ranko), Ichiro Nakaya (Itami), Toru Abe (Torachiro Yamaga), Isao Hashimoto (Samonji), Yoshio Aoki (Ohashi), Kuniyasu Atsumi (Adachi), Kazuo Kato (Fukuda), Tanobu Hozumi (Fari), Housel Komatsu (chief of police), Hatsuho Yamatani (Ito), Kin Omei (Hauda); Running time: 94 mins.; Released on October 12, 1974.

Ryosuke Kinugawa, a gentle individual, hears about a thriving new town and sets out to find a job there. Expecting to find a peaceful environment, his belief is shattered when he sees the murder of a young man, Yanaga, the son of the town's founder. Kinugawa soon finds the town no different than other new towns, for gangsters are quick to get a foothold.

Kinugawa befriends Rokusuke Sawamura who takes the new-comer to a bar. Before long, three men kick open the door to the establishment and begin annoying the proprietress and her female assistant, Fusako. A sudden violent change overcomes Kinugawa. Exclaiming something unintelligible in a different language, although he knows only Japanese, Kinugawa wages a one-man war against the intruders, trouncing them all with little effort. Kinugawa appears to be a veritable Jekyll and Hyde.

The next day at the bar, the gangsters, known as the Ohashi Group, come to get even with Kinugawa, who, reversing his violent image, passes out, and the gang abducts Fusako. When he revives, Kinugawa with Sawamura hurry to Ohashi headquarters to rescue Fusako, and there Kinugawa sees the man who murdered the young son of the city's founder.

Several days later, Kinugawa and Sawamura learn of the juggling of accounts by some get-rich-quick men. So the two sneak into their office to obtain the tampered ledgers, but are caught. Once again Kinugawa becomes violent, and men are tossed right and left under his hefty blows.

With no actual wish to get involved in the town's troubles, Kinugawa's mind is changed when Fusako is killed. When all the top men who are "poisoning" the place are assembled, Kinugawa exposes them and "hell" breaks loose in a violent, cleansing battle against the cancerous elements.

Itami, Kinugawa's friend, tells him that when he was a baby, he had needed a complete blood transfusion. At the time, Robertis, a big Mafia boss, had died suddenly in Japan, and his blood had been pumped into Kinugawa's body. Relieved, Kinugawa is immensely proud of this quirk of fate since it appears his actions are aimed in the cause of good.

With the town quiet for the first time, Kinugawa departs, in spite of the urgings of Sawamura, leaving a town where he had fought so hard to restore peace.



BELLADONNA (KANASHIMI NO BERAONNA); Co-produced by Nippon Herald Films, Inc. and Mushi Productions, Ltd.; Executive producer: Katsuni Furukawa; Director: Eiichi Yamamoto; Screenplay: Yoshiyuki Fukuda; Story: The Witch (1862) by Jules Michelet; Art director: Kuni Fukai; Animation director: Gisaburo Sugii; Music: Masahiko Sato; Lyrics by Yu Aku and Asei Kobayashi; Sung by Mayumi Tachibana; Live still photography: Daigo Moriyama; Voices: Aiko Nagayama (Jeanne), Tatsuya Nakadai (Devil), Takao Inoue (Jean), Masaya Takahashi (Count), Shigako Shimegi (Countess), Masakane Yonekura (Priest), Chinatsu Nakayama (narrator); Filmed in Eastmancolor and "Animeronnesque"; Running time: 89 mins.; Released on June 30, 1973.

BELLADONNA

Jules Michelet, renowned 19th century French historian/author, manifested the doubt in his controversial book *The Witch (La Sorciere)* that witches were women representing incarnations of evil, God-forsaken souls, victims of the anti-natural interdictions of the Church. He supposed they might have been the first women to struggle for human freedom against fatality.

It had been the long-cherished wish of Eiichi Yamamoto, a young Japanese animator, to dramatize this story. His desire and talent enabled him to realize his dream in a feature-length cartoon replete with lyricism and sensuality, a synthesis of pictorial design, novel structure and gorgeous color.

On his staff was Yoshiyuki Fukuda, currently one of Japan's most successful playwrights, as author of the screenplay, the young popular illustrator, Kuni Fukai, as art director, and Masahiko Sato, a brilliant jazz pianist, as the film's music director.

BELLADONNA is the third in a series of co-productions of Nippon Herald Films and Mushi Productions, following A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS and CLEOPATRA.

In a small poverty-stricken French farm village in the Middle Ages there live two young lovers, Jean and Jeanne. Following their wedding, they venture to the castle of the local Count to inform him of the marriage. The pleasure of sleeping with the new bride on the first night belongs to the Count, but Jean's offer of gold to buy this privilege falls due to the Count's attraction for the lissome bride.

The next morning the newly-weds consummate their marriage, but even their passion is unable to console the lovers from the nightmare of the previous night. Jeanne feels that if this cruel fate is the will of God, she will forsake even Him to gain peace of mind.

With the Count and his soldiers away due to the continual outbreak of wars, Jeanne earns money by spinning yarn and money-lending. Her efforts are so rewarding that she soon becomes the leader in the fief's economy, much to the alarm of her superstitious countrymen who fear her rise might be devil-inspired.

With the arrival of winter the Count and his men return home. He is enraged to find Jeanne more respected than himself, and his conniving wife urges him to declare Jeanne a witch. Thus, the eager villagers decide to persecute her, but she escapes and finds refuge in a narrow valley where blooms the beautiful belladonna. Here, free from God, the Count and the evil villagers, she looks noble and lovely, rescued from slavery, but not without the Devil's help.

A plague spreading through Europe wends its way to the village. Only Jeanne is able to produce medicine to (continued on following page)



Illustrations by Kuni Fukai.



THE BRIDE FROM HADES (alt.: MY BRIDE IS A GHOST; KAIODAN BOTAN DORO); Produced by Daitai Motion Picture Co., Ltd.; Executive producer: Masaichi Nagata; Screenplay: Yoshikata Yoda; Director: Satsuo Yamamoto; Photography: Chishiki Makura; Music: Sei Ikeno; Editor: Kanji Suganuma; Starring: Kojiro Hongo (Shinzaburo), Miyoko Akasa (Otsuyu), Mayumi Ogawa (Onine), Michiko Otsuka (Oyone), Ko Rishimura (Banzo), Takashi Shimura (Hakuodo); Art director: Yoshinobu Nishio; Filmed in color and scope; Released June 15, 1968; Running time: 89 min.

Shinzaburo Hagiwara, the third son of a Hatamoto samurai, meets Otsuyu, a courtesan, on the night of the Buddhist service to float lanterns down the river. The following night Otsuyu visits Shinzaburo's home, and he is told that Otsuyu was a samurai's daughter, and that her father had been held responsible for something he had

THE BRIDE FROM HADES

not done and had been forced to commit hara-kiri. She, too, had been forced to her present position. Though Shinzaburo is being pressured to marry his late brother's wife against his will, Otsuyu's story arouses his sympathy, and they fall in love.

That night Banzo, a neighbor, is puzzled to hear Shinzaburo talking to someone in his home, for no one ever visits him there, so Banzo looks in through the window and is shocked to see Shinzaburo holding a skeleton in his arms.

The following day, Banzo learns that Otsuyu had committed suicide recently rather than take the rich patron her employer had forced on her. So Banzo informs Shinzaburo of the whole story but his words fall on deaf ears.

Banzo asks Hakuodo, a fortune teller, to save his friend's life. She agrees and persuades Shinzaburo not to see Otsuyu any more. So he recluses himself in a small shrine protected by sealed charms. However, Shinzaburo weakens, knowing well that Otsuyu is no longer of this world and one more embrace would mean his death.

Thus, on the following morning, his body is found hand in hand with a skeleton.



(continued from preceding page)

fight the disease using belladonna. The Count, demanding to know the secret, sends Jean for Jeanne, offering her a handsome reward. She refuses....unless she can have everything in the world. The Count, mad with rage, sentences her to be burned at the stake as a witch. Hearing of the execution, Jean runs to Jeanne's side where his curse against the Count results in a stabbing death by several of the loyal Count's guards. Jeanne, enveloped in flames, moves her lips at this moment. She may have called Jean's name.

Yamamoto on BELLADONNA

For anyone weak in mind and body, suffering all kinds of privations, I think madness and hallucinations may be the first flickers of life. Some can even revive from this deplorable situation, as seen in Michelet's book, *The Witch*. The Middle Ages of Europe meant for the Christian Civilization to have reached a summit, and, for the feudal lords, to have settled on their thrones. For the serf woman, however, it was the darkest and most thankless era in that she was discriminated against even by her husband. Christianity of the day, which had become bent on ritual

rather than much else, could not or would not respond to her cry for help. She had only an imaginary imp to talk to--the imp being the Devil himself. He taught her the pleasures of treachery. The witch, possessed by the Devil, was like a poisonous herb burned at the stake to bring about modern civilization. The foregoing thought is by Michelet as historian. The wonders of human consciousness and woman's sensuality have always impressed me. The present age appears to see a climax of science and technology. To me, the present has little more than an eschatological sense. But I am not disappointed, because I am a man, not a robot, and still retain at least a piece of madness. So thinking, I decided to dramatize Michelet's *The Witch*. The animated film is an ideal vehicle with which to describe the world of the mind as written in his book. In this film I gave the Devil a certain image and formalized the expression so that the mental actions are depicted by animation and the external world by stills. The movement of animated film as opposed to the static quality of the stills provide excellent contrast to show the difference in the characteristics of the two worlds. Therefore, in this film, characters do not move their lips when they speak; conversely, however, even a hair moves when it comes to expressing mental action. Included in the film are the techniques of collage, watercolor against a background of basically white and the old Japanese picture scrolls. This is my humble attempt to dramatize an European subject with a Japanese heart.

LEGEND OF DINOSAURS AND MONSTER BIRDS (KYORYU-KAICHO NO DENSETSU); A Toei Tokyo Film Production; Director: Junji Kureta; Executive producer: Keiichi Hashimoto; Screenplay: Masaru Igami, Ko Matsumoto and Ichiro Ohzu; Director of photography: Shigeru Akazuka; Lighting: Keiji Inoue; Art directors: Yasujiro Ananori; Special effects director: Fumihiko Ohbayashi; Editor: Isamu Ichida; Music: Masao Yagi; Sound recording: Teruhiko Arakawa; Assistant director: Kazuo Noda; Stills: Takeshi Kihura; Publicity: Takeshi Fujimoto; Cast: Tsunehiko Matase (Setsu Serizawa), Shotaro Hayashi (Akira Taniki), Nobiko Sawa (Akiko Osano), Satoko Kyoshima (Junko Sonoda), Fuyukichi Maki (Masahiro Muku), Kinshi Nakamura (Hideyuki Sakai), Hiroshi Nawa (Masahiko Miyawaki), So Takizawa (Jiro Shinamoto), Yusuke Tsukasa (Susumu Hirano), Go Nawata (Hiroshi Sugiyama), Yukari Miyazawa (Hiroko Takami), Masahiro Arikawa (Setaro Shintaku), Tamikashi Karazawa (Umura), Sachio Miyashiro (Kobayashi); Filmed in ToeiScope and EastmanColor; Running time: 93 minutes; Release date: April 29, 1977; Production began on location at Mount Fuji, October 12, 1976.



LEGEND OF DINOSAURS

A series of great earthquakes throughout the globe combined with unusual climatic changes that reportedly herald another ice age indicate the earth is slowly approaching a crisis. Several events in Japan, apart from creating economic and political turmoil, initiate a fear syndrome in an already restless society.

It is August, 19__, summer changing autumnward. Campers at the base of Mt. Fuji partake of the fast-disappearing summer, but already Fuji is capped with unseasonable snow. Now dormant, Mt. Fuji has a very short history, its eruption causing the formation of its five lakes, three of which are supposedly connected under the vast lava field of Aokigahara.

From the depths of the Aokigahara Forest, which extends from the banks of Lake Sai, one of the lakes surrounding Fuji, a badly bruised and shocked young girl emerges, breathing her last after uttering a few strange words. The incident forces Setsu Serizawa, a geologist working as an appraiser of ornamental stones, into a hasty investigation of Mt. Fuji. His professional interest is piqued, fostered by his deceased father's theory that dinosaurs exist around Lake Sai. Killed by hibernation, they are awaiting climatic and cataclysmic changes to free them. This theory, scorned by the public, resulted in an anxiety that eventually weakened and killed Setsu's father.

In the forest Setsu plummets down a slope knocking himself unconscious due to an unexpected earth tremor. He is rescued by Shohei Muku, a man vastly knowledgeable about Fuji and its environs and as such finds Setsu's father's theory absurd.

Mysterious events begin to occur around the mountain: bats are congregating during the day; the population of the insect world is multiplying; an inordinate increase in the water temperature of Lake Sai is occurring. Adding to the mystery are the disappearances of a young couple who had been riding in a "pedal boat" on the warm lake and the death of the diver sent to locate the bodies.

The next day Setsu visits the Fuji Weather Laboratory. He learns of recent changes in the earth's crust in the Fuji Volcanic Zone, which curiously parallels the conditions necessary for the appearance of the dinosaurs as set forth by his father.

An incident. Pursuing her work of collecting folklore, Junko hears an old woman sing a song retelling her village's belief in the existence of dragons. Muku informs Junko of the truth of the "legend." The "dragon" is only a huge snake. Baffled by it all, she bicycles home. Along the way she is outpaced by a riderless horse. An incredibly loud noise is heard in the forest green before her, then something heavy drops with a thud in her path.



Photo © Toei Co., Ltd.



She focuses her eyes and is sickened by what she sees: the decapitated carcass of the horse that only moments ago ran past her.

Setzu investigates the area where Junko faced her horror, and the grass is found to be flattened by some large, heavy object. Returning to the hut used by his father for his research, Setzu examines his father's data and is convinced that the existence of dinosaurs is an undeniable truth.

At the annual "dragon" festival people are enjoying the autumn day, oblivious to a huge shadow passing in the lake nearby. At some distance from the festivities, the water suddenly becomes turbulent and up from the depths a dinosaur makes its threatening appearance, devouring two students before it plunges back into its watery habitat. A survivor and a UPI reporter who witnessed the calamity bear the news to the village officials whose dubiousness to the whole event brings no results.

Several hours later a school teacher at the Lake Sai camping site becomes another victim, while out on the

AND MONSTER BIRDS

Photos: © Ken Goh, Ltd.



mist-covered lake Junko, the folklorist, is soon to become victim number seven of the supposedly hypothetical dinosaurs.

Newspapers issued on the following day are filled with sensational stories of the Lake Sai monster. Newsmen and photographers swarm around the edge of the lake hoping to catch a glimpse of the enemy, while a research conference attended by many scientists listen to Setzu recite his father's theory on the possibility of dinosaurs in the lake area. But the meeting turns to heated opposition and proves futile.

However, a thorough search of the lake is instituted through the use of sonar, underwater cameras and an "infra-red explorer." The three-day investigation produces nothing and is brought to a close.

Taniki, a local reporter, believing Aokigahara is the haven of the dispassionate monster, convinces Muku in to guiding him through the forest; Muku hopes the tour will terminate the nonsensical belief in dinosaurs once and for all.

Setzu and Akiko, a young woman diver for whom he shares some affection, dive into Lake Sai and discover a huge underwater cave which disgorges the remains of one of the students. Shock or no, the two continue through the cave, the current spending them faster and faster to its end.

Standing in a hollow into which both have tumbled, Taniki and Muku gaze in terrified amazement at the giant egg before them. A crackling sound ensues and the egg breaks apart from which emerges a huge bird, its legs grabbing the two men to pacify the new-born's voracious appetite.

Setzu and Akiko enter the underground cavern that lies above water level and find the brutally mauled bodies of Taniki and Muku.

Meanwhile, on the banks of the Sai, TV cameras and reporters are awaiting the news story of a lifetime. Above them, unnoticed by most, a strange aurora appears and illuminated clouds begin covering the sky. Breaking through the cover swoops a gliding pterodactyl, whose dive into the stunned spectators spells a multitude of deaths.

Setzu and Akiko, finally reaching ground level, encounter the dread dinosaur and run pell-mell back into the mouth of the cave. Their fate appears sealed until the pterodactyl makes a vicious attack on the land-bound behemoth. Their death struggle is eventually ceased by boulders crumbling from the cave roof onto the misplaced miscreants, and the ground swallows them both up.

Molten lava begins boiling up from the earth's bowels, its vividness being reflected on the clouds above. Setzu and Akiko are stunned, gazing at this hell on earth.

WEIRD TRIP (KAIDAN RYOKO): Produced by Shochiku Company, Ltd.; Executive producer: Kiyoshi Shimazu; Screenplay: Kazuo Funabashi; Director: Shoji Segawa; Photography: Keiji Maruyama; Art director: Masao Kumagi; Music: Seitaro Ohmori; Starring: Frankie Sakai (Shinpei Ohwada), Tomoe Hifio (Uneko and Satou), Kensaku Morita (Daisuke Sakaguchi), Yumiko Nogawa (Yumi Okamura), Akane Kawasaki (Chizu), Casey Tananine (conductor), Norihei Miki (Shosaku Sakaguchi); Running time: 91 min.; Filmed in color and scope; Released June 10, 1972.

Shinpei Ohwada arrives at Taiji, Makayama Prefecture as the new stationmaster. The station's staff includes Shosaku Sakaguchi, who was Shinpei's senior years ago, Detsuko, his son, and Kohda and Sugiyama.

Shosaku leads Shinpei to an old house, in actuality a nunnery, and says that Shinpei can peep into the wo-



WEIRD TRIP

men's bathroom. Shinpei has not been with a woman since his wife, Uneko, died two years before, and so he is quite frustrated. As he peers through the window Uneko's ghost appears, and, sympathizing with his problem, tells him to sleep with other women if it is only for fun.

Shinpei happens to meet Chizu Okamura, a young woman diver and Daisuke's girlfriend. She invites Shinpei to a restaurant operated by Yumi Okamura, Chizu's elder sister, and he becomes fascinated by this woman's beauty. In the back room Shosaku secretly looks on, jealous of Yumi's friendliness, for she is to be his future bride.

Shosaku sends Tamami, a young masseuse, to Shinpei's house and seduce him. When Shinpei and Tamami are about to make love, he sees Uneko and is unable to perform.

Yumi asks Shinpei to go to Kawayu Spa, and he gets excited with anticipation. But when he reaches an inn, their intended rendezvous, he is disappointed to see Chizu beside Yumi. And later, Daisuke comes as well, having been sent by his father to keep a watchful eye on Yumi and Shinpei, but he only succeeds in sending the couple away.

It begins to rain while Shinpei and Yumi seek a bathhouse where the two can bathe alone, so they take shelter in an empty theatre famous for its ghost plays. A group of men and women gambling in a dressing room of the theatre notice Shinpei and Yumi and disguise themselves as ghosts and monsters to scare the two away. Shinpei's dream of having Yumi is shattered.

One day an engineer of a freight train reports his having seen a strange woman in a nearby tunnel. The mystery interests Shinpei and Shosaku who examine the tunnel and see a ghostly figure which frightens them out of the darkened corridor. Meanwhile, Daisuke, at the station, sees a suspicious man wearing a monster's mask, chases after him and eventually breaks the mask with a bamboo sword, getting a glance of the man's face before the man escapes. It is later learned that some 100,000 yen has been stolen from the safe.

At a Bon Festival dance, Shinpei spots the "tunnel" lady among the dancers, and Daisuke sees the "masked" man. Shinpei, Shosaku and Daisuke follow them to a small temple in the nunnery where they come upon a group of gamblers and the "mystery" people, all of whom are captured by Daisuke and a policeman.

When Shinpei returns to the dance, he sees Uneko and speaks to her. But her reaction is strangely different. Yumi comes forward and introduces the woman with her as Satou, her close friend. Uneko's ghost says to Shinpei, "She looks like me. If you marry her, I can rest in peace." And the image disappears. Shinpei is greatly pleased and joins the dancing with Satou.

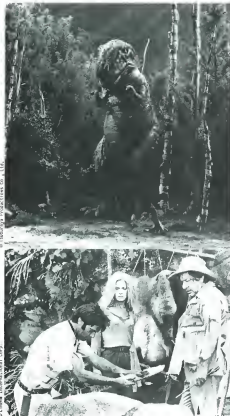


MONTI © Shochiku Co., Ltd.



THE LAST DINOSAUR (SAIGO NO KYORU); An Arthur Rankin Jr./Jules Bass Film; Produced by Arthur Rankin Jr. and Jules Bass; Associate producer: Benni Korzen; Directed by Alex Grasshoff; Screenplay: William Thomas Overgard; Music: Maury Laws; Title song ("The Last Dinosaur") sung by Nancy Wilson; Music by Maury Laws; Lyrics by Jules Bass; Arranged and conducted by Bernard Maffer; Co-production personnel from Tsuburaya Production Co., Ltd.--Executive producer: Noboru Tsuburaya; Director: Tsugunobu "Tom" Kobani; Music arranged and conducted by Ken Hirose; Photography: Masaaki Ueda; Lighting: Masaaki Yoneyama; Art director: Kazuhiko Fujiwara; Recording: Yuji Hiroyoshi; Editors: Tatsuji

THE LAST DINOSAUR



Makashizu and Minoru Kozono; Assistant director: Shohel Tojyo; Production manager: Minoru Kurita; Still photographer: Isao Katsumura; Special effects: Kazuo Sagawa (Director), Michihisa Miyashige and Minoru Nakano (Optical work), Sadao Sato (Cameraman), Yasuo Kitazawa (Lighting), Tetsuzo Osawa (Art director), Moriaki Uematsu (Special effect specialist), Yoshiyuki Yoshimura (Assistant director), Kazuo Ohashi (Production manager); Production coordinator: Kiyotaka "Jimmy" Okubo and Kazumi Kasai; Starring Richard Boone (Masten Thrust), Steven Keats (Chuck Wade), Luther Rackley (Sunta), Joan Van Ark (Frankie Banks); Color telecast Friday, February 11, 1977 on ABC Television Network in 2 hour time slot; International theatrical distribution: Cinema International Corporation.

Masten Thrust has had it all: money, power, women... the works. Now pushing 60, he lives for one thing... hunting. Mounted heads and horns march around his trophy room in great herds, and it seems there is nothing left to hunt, until...

One of Thrust's oil drilling teams probing under the Polar Cap breaks through into a pocket of suspended time. Here, in a minute prehistoric world, are remnants of a Jurassic period and the largest predator ever to stalk the earth, the Tyrannosaurus Rex...the last dinosaur of his time...as is Masten Thrust, the ruthless big game hunter, representative of the last of his breed.

A select hunting party is chosen. A Nobel prize-winning scientist, a famous female photographer, a paleontologist and a Masai tracker are led by Thrust back into time via the Polar Borer, a rocket-like vehicle using lasers to burrow into the earth's crust. But the hunt proves to be a disaster as weapons are destroyed, the scientist killed by the Rex and means of return apparently lost. The group is trapped in a nightmare of survival against the elements and a vicious tribe of early men relentlessly pursuing the distraught explorers.

A handmade crossbow is used to defeat the prehistoric humans while Thrust leads the party to food and shelter, thriving as he does in the environment. But his obsession to kill the last dinosaur outdistances his thoughts for return to the modern world, thus his companions find a method of escape to their homeworld, leaving Masten alone with his crude, handbuilt catapult waiting for the beast he has longed to destroy.

Purported to be a model animation effects feature (continued on page 34)

Bottom: Joan Van Ark and Richard Boone watch Steven Keats making a crossbow in their attempt to hunt down the last dinosaur.

THE POSSESSED (alt., THE WITCH; YOGA); Produced by Nagata Productions and Daiei Motion Picture Company, Ltd.; Distributed by Shochiku Co., Ltd.; Executive producer: Masaiichi Nagata; Co-producer: Yasuyoshi Tokuna; Director: Tadashi Imai; Planning: Masumi Kananaru; Story: Ryunosuke Akutagawa (based on his short story written in 1918); Screenplay: Yoko Mizuki; Photography: Kazuo Miyagawa; Music: Ritschiro Manabe; Running time: 96 minutes; Released October 16, 1976; Filmed in Fuji Color and scope; Starring: Machiko Kyo (Oshina), Kazuko Inano (Sawa), Shinjiro Ebara (Shinzo, Oshina's husband), Rentaro Mikuni (Unryu), Kiyoshi Kodama (Ihara), Tanie Kitabayashi (midwife), Miki Jimbo (Otoshi), Taro Shigaki (Shinzo, Otoshi's fiancé).



THE POSSESSED

It is the wedding ceremony of Oshina, the only daughter of extremely wealthy parents, and Shinzo, the young boy marrying into Oshina's family. Oshina's cousin, Sawa, who was raised with her from childhood as though they were sisters, bears a deep jealousy toward her pseudo-sister, and so on Oshina's wedding night, Sawa, locked in her bedroom, chants the words of a mysterious prayer. In the bridal room, as Shinzo finds he is unable to consummate the marriage, neither of the newly-marrieds are aware of the strange eyes of hatred that are gleaming in the darkness of the room.

Shinzo begins to abuse Oshina, claiming that she is not normal, and begins an affair with Sawa, who has been flirting with him. In desperation, Oshina visits a doctor who tells her that there is nothing physically wrong with her. She turns then to a man called Unryu, an ascetic devotee, who advises her to divorce Shinzo because he is under the influence of evil spirits.

It is the fall of 1923, and the Great Kanto Earthquake destroys Tokyo. In this one night Oshina loses everything: parents, home and business. She meets a man, Ihara, as she wanders aimlessly among the ruins. He lets her live in the branch office of his company until things can work themselves out. This continues until Ihara, though married, falls in love with Oshina. But each time they make love, fearful-looking spirits appear over them as though controlling the love-making to greater passionate heights.

Two months later, Ihara's daughter dies suddenly, and at the same time it is learned that Oshina is pregnant. She slowly realizes that the spirit of Ihara's daughter is haunting her and taking over the soul of her unborn child. Oshina decides to have an abortion, and while the midwife's treatment begins, strange eyes gleam in the darkness behind them. Bizarre events begin to occur as the midwife rubs Oshina's back with a Buddhist rosary, and the skin touched by the religious object instantly turns slimy. Oshina faints. The image of Ihara's daughter's face rises up and slowly fades away.

Ten years pass. There are rumors of a famous kimono maker of Asakusa whose kimonos can make the wearer appear to be beautiful. It is Oshina. And Sawa has come to visit her. Never married and unlucky with men, Sawa is now living with her illegitimate daughter, Otoshi, who is engaged to a wealthy man also named Shinzo. Sawa has come for a kimono for her daughter, but Oshina declines. Angered, Sawa, one night, steals a rosary from Oshina, a powerful rosary, she has learned. And that night Oshina turns into an aged witch.

A few weeks pass. Otoshi leaves home and disappears. (continued on page 34)



Photo © Shochiku Co., Ltd.

Television: 'Submersion of Japan'

BARRY SHLACTER

Filming the total destruction of Japan wasn't easy, and the television network that did it found it still couldn't get all the nation's viewers on the edges of their seats to watch.

Actually the destruction went on for months until a TV news announcer appeared with tears streaking down both cheeks and composed himself long enough to tell a fearful nation, "Yellow countrymen, sayonara..."

The picture on the tube jumped as the studio was thumped asunder by a powerful earthquake and the TV screen momentarily went blank.

When the picture returned, a tableau of destruction and horror was laid before the viewers' eyes. One by one, each of Tokyo's landmarks, from giant skyscrapers to mammoth transmitting towers, tumbled down, covering the streets with rubble and snuffing out the lives of millions of the people in the Japanese capital of 11 million.

What occurred next on prime time Sunday night television was an impossible act to follow—or even repeat. The Japanese islands, ravaged by earthquake and fire, slowly slipped beneath the ocean and settled permanently on the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

And the television series called THE SUBMERSION OF JAPAN came to an end. It had not been a big success.

The network, one of five in Japan, had believed that bad news would be good business. Two years ago, Japan's novelists and moviemakers turned to themes of doom, and found an eager market among the nation's 110 million people, already melancholy over an economic downturn.

SUBMERSION started out with 18 per cent of the Sunday evening audience. By the time Japan had become sunken property, however, only 13 per cent remained.

If the show's popularity wasn't all that Tokyo Broadcasting System had hoped for, one reason might have been the acting. The story of the ever-eroding archipelago seldom got away from melodrama. But the special effects were something else.

It took two days' shooting for two minutes of suitably shocking footage, said officials at Tokyo Broadcasting.

Each installment was preceded and followed by a special announcement informing viewers they were watching a fictional account—not newsreel film—because the destruction looked chillingly authentic at times.

In one episode, powerful tremors struck the picturesque old city of Kamakura and its giant statue of Buddha shook and trembled before being swallowed up by the earth. The city's terrified residents tried to escape by boat only to be called back—too late—with news of an approaching tidal wave.

Kyoto, spared by American forces during World War II because of its rich cultural heritage, lost each of its famous temples and castles down gaping chasms before another tidal wave turned the ancient city into a vast watery grave.

Osaka's eight-story castle fared somewhat better in a subsequent episode. After that industrial city was damaged by a series of earthquakes, yet another tidal wave rushed toward the mammoth castle, lifted it up, and gently floated it away.

The story has the United Nations organize a massive evacuation that makes Dunkirk look like a Boy Scout canoe trip and manages to save millions when Japan's final doom becomes apparent. The population is divided up and given shelter in the United States, the Soviet Union, Canada, Australia and elsewhere. But our hero and heroine, a young nurse and research assistant at a seismological

agency, are left abandoned at a Christian church on the last sliver of Japan still above water. As their hands clasp for the last time, the series ends...perhaps quenching once and for all Japan's two-year long doom bomb.

THE SUBMERSION OF JAPAN TV series was adapted from a popular science fiction novel of the same name. The book sold more than 3.5 million copies and a feature-length film soon followed.

The movie ultimately became the biggest earning Japanese film of 1974. It helped spawn a host of books, an *After the Apocalypse* magazine and another doom movie, this one about the end of the world.

But after the two-year media blitz, the Japanese seem to have lost interest in the theme. And SUBMERSION lost the TV ratings battle to a historical drama of sex, violence and court intrigue in 17th-century Japan.

(Reprinted from an Associated Press story that appeared in the Toledo Blade on Sunday June 8, 1975.)

Below: A technician helps the "destruction" of Japan along for the televised version of the apocalyptic catastrophe. The flames are burning glue; the smoke, titanium chloride.

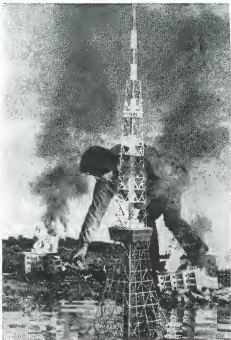


Photo © Tokyo Broadcasting System

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WANTED: Japanese Fantasy Film Journal issue #1 through #4. Preference will be given to issues in best condition on a first come, first served basis. Also interested in any other material including books, magazines, posters, models, stills, etc. on Japanese science fiction films, especially Toho's, dealing with giant monsters and/or aliens with superior technology getting involved with Earth. Contact James Smallwood, 335 Heege Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63122.

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(THE LAST DINOSAUR, continued from page 31)
from producers Arthur Rankin, Jr. and Jules Bass, the team credited with previous tele-specials using puppet animation effects from Japanese studios, especially Toei, such as THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY, SMOKEY THE BEAR, THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES, RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER and many others, the film instead uses the man-in-suit effect popularized by Toho to portray the tyrannosaurus rex, triceratops and several other prehistoric beasts. This time the effects are the creation of Tsuburaya Productions, now headed by Eiji's second son, Noburo Tsuburaya, who appears pretty delighted to have had the opportunity to work on THE LAST DINOSAUR for American television. "We've reached the top of Mont-Blanc (the ABC television network)," he said, "now we'd like to climb the Everest (Irwin Allen disaster films)."

The creator of DINOSAUR is cartoonist William Thomas Overgard, who has been the artist for the "Steve Roper" comic strip since 1952, and who made his initial foray into film with THE LAST DINOSAUR. Overgard feels screenwriting is merely an extension of cartooning.

"A cartoonist has to have the mind of a camera, see things from different angles, different perspectives. Each cut is simply another panel. I enjoy writing immensely because it allows me to escape the mold of the comic strip and stretch my imagination by dealing with themes Roper would never touch upon. And it keeps me from feeling I've turned stale."

Overgard first conceived THE LAST DINOSAUR two years ago as a story about a modern hunter who travels back in time to track down the last of the tyrannosaurs, but ABC had plans to do an updated KING KONG and the project was shelved. When Dino DeLaurentis snagged the rights to the giant ape first, the network jealously felt it too needed a monster and asked Overgard to come up with another concept. He did, basing his new screenplay on his earlier scenario.

At first ABC frowned on Overgard writing the screenplay. "If you don't have several credits," he explains, "they start running scared. But the producer, Arthur Rankin, insisted that I not only do the scenario, but also be available for rewriting in Japan for four weeks, where most of the film was shot."

(Parts of the preceding reprint from an article by John Stanley in the San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle, Sunday, February 6, 1977)

(THE POSSESSED, continued from page 32)

Sawa and Shinzo eventually locate her, but Otoshi's body has been taken over by the spirit of Oshima. Sawa then attempts to stab Oshima as she takes bodily form, but the knife mysteriously turns and stabs Sawa. Screaming, she runs to the river and throws herself in. The witch, Oshima, follows Sawa into the river as Otoshi recovers from the spell. Shinzo holds Otoshi back as she attempts to rush after her mother.

The next morning Sawa's body is found floating in the river, but the body of Oshima appears to be lost forever.



Coherent fears and fantasies of mass destruction are found in all cultures. One need only study Greek, Germanic or Japanese mythology, for instance, to conclude this. These primeval fears, multiplied million-fold by modern technology, have yielded new monsters, new mythical demons to take the place of the devils of old. These new creatures of death and darkness swarm not the uncharted oceans, but the uncharted subconscious of modern civilization. Our modern-day cyclops, television, exploits our everyday fears of possible chemical, biological or atomic extinction. The monsters of the Greeks are still with us, but in different and diversified forms.

A case in point are the many monster films appearing throughout the industrialized centers of the world during the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, and the post-industrial, social revolutions which evolved from this conflict.

Although our initial fear of nuclear war has lessened today (we have different fears presently, e.g., the energy crisis, as this is being written), one must recall the intense paranoia of the times and the opportunity for American studios to exploit these fears. The results were, predictably, horror films such as *THEM*, *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS*, *THE AMAZING COLOSSAL MAN* and so forth. All were monsters somehow unleashed by technology.

But a unique and very revealing phenomenon was to occur in Japan. A form already intact in American theatres was transported to a country ravaged by the first atomic bombs. Ingrained fears of nuclear weaponry and mass destruction, stronger than the American counterparts, plagued the Japanese theatres for more than a decade: the cities as yet to be completely rebuilt, the physical residue of bombing and destruction still apparent to the common theatregoer.

GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS (*GOJIRA* in Japan) was the starting point, the first attempt by a major Japanese studio (Toho) to exploit public fears in the box office. The film has revealing qualities when seen today, qualities lacking in later efforts by director Ishiro Honda and special effects man, Eiji Tsuburaya. The mood of post-war Japan is starkly set upon the viewer, perhaps in greater detail than other non-fantasy films to date. This might be *GODZILLA*'s sole value to cinematic history, other than mere spectacle.

The film, similar in plot, but not style, to the many international film monsters roaming the earthlands, involves a prehistoric carnivore somehow put to sleep for millions of years, awakened by an atomic test in the Pacific islands near Japan.

To untrained Western eyes the film may at first appear as a routine monster movie. Yet, there is some quality that sets this film aside from other creature films, both American and Japanese, of its kind.

There is a bizarre, heavily stylized, black and white, bleak photography, typically and intentionally Japanese--the sea and landscape are photographed almost as if they are from an ancient woodcutting; the initial appearance of the dinosaur monster, "*Godzilla*," as called by superstitious islanders off the coast of Japan, filmed as if some nightmarish creature from the darkness of the mythological tall-tales of feudal times. Thus, through photography, the audience experiences a gloominess and mystery characteristic of the "*kabuki*" (the most important theatrical art of Japan originating in the 16th century, combining strong elements of stylization, music and dance). The viewer is uncertain whether this dinosaur is a mere figment of superstitious natives or whether this monster really exists.

"Godzilla is... the fears of... modern and ancient Japan..."

An American correspondent in Japan, Raymond Burr, arrives after several mysterious sinkings of tankers off the coast. While investigating the tall-tales of the natives in a radioactive village supposedly attacked by "Godzilla" the previous night, the gargantuan beast appears briefly.

Upon this appearance the mythical elements are readily apparent--the sound of footsteps, kabuki-style drum beats, rhythmic, as if to symbolize the earth-shaking power of this dragon from the sea. Constantly we hear this almost nauseating beating prior to the appearance of each sequence involving death and destruction, and in the absence of these "footsteps" a similar low-keyed piano note, almost frightening in its Poe-like pounding, is heard. These sight-sound elements, even if overlooked, add a certain air of strangeness lacking in the later films of Honda and Tsuburaya.

Godzilla is then the fears of both modern and ancient Japan--the subconscious racial traumas, inescapably hereditary, as described by Nietzsche, found in all generations of a race, no matter how geographically diverse or how separate in time. Godzilla is the fear of the sea--fear whose roots stem from the endless struggles of sailors centuries ago in tiny ships voyaging to islands far away; fear of earthquakes and tidal waves which has not faded; of typhoons which have sunk many a ship, including the iron giants of World War II. Godzilla, as if some dark myth supposedly lost thousands of years ago, rises from his resting place to haunt, in fact to test, man's capacity to survive in a microcosm of cities and technology.

Japanese faith in the military, so shattered during World War II, is low. Modern aircraft, battalions of tanks, battleships and destroyers constantly pound the radioactive reptilian to no avail. Wars of aggression have previously been popular in Japanese psychology. That the Army and Navy with advanced equipment cannot stop a beast from the ancient past implies that simple-minded action will not deter the evil of a dark, mysterious and hostile Nature.

This mood, typical of the immediate post-war period, is further evidenced by the martial music, warships of the sea dropping depth-charges and tanks pounding shell after shell with no effect.

The power of the city itself, the very veins and blood of modern civilization, is helpless to stop the monster. Electricity, symbol of modern light and energy, is used to shock the reptilian beast from life. When this fails, Godzilla destroys the metropolis in what appears to be a recreation of the fire-bomb raids of 1945. Air-

raid sirens sound in an almost exact simulation of World War II, with the exception that the enemy is a fire-breathing giant intent upon laying waste to the structures of civilization.

In a simultaneous sequence a young scientist, somewhat disfigured and disillusioned during World War II, develops a revolutionary new weapon. This weapon, as it is revealed, is the only method in existence able to destroy the monster.

But the scientist, afraid that the weapon may fall into the wrong hands if used, initially refuses. As millions of civilians are crowded, as the television cameras broadcast the death and destruction in what seems to be a symbolic reminder of Hiroshima, the young scientist, finally yielding to emotion, agrees, but on only one condition--that he be the sole user of the "oxygen-destroyer" against the Godzilla dinosaur. Destroying the years of research data, he takes the sole model and with an accomplice descends from a ship to unleash the weapon on the sleeping, undersea reptilian.

This sequence, supposedly the anti-climax, is, I believe, the most impressive of the film. It is Honda's masterpiece. In no other film by Honda have I found such a unique synthesis of sound, of obscure underwater images, of smoothly floating music. At its best, this sequence approaches an almost ballet-like beauty, an ethereal and never-again duplicated fragment. Honda, when unmarred by the necessity to create films solely for children and American audiences, demonstrates that he is capable of cinematic artistry closely approaching that of the pure narrative styles of both Jack Arnold and Akira Kurosawa.

The two divers descend, floating in a scene with the gracefulness usually reserved for the kabuki theatre. The music, hauntingly appropriate, almost makes one forget that a giant dinosaur with God-like capabilities awaits below. The scientist, planting the cylindrical weapon on the ocean floor, activates the oxygen-destroyer. Rather than reveal his secret to the world, he cuts his umbilical cord, killing himself like the kamikaze of old.

The death of the monster and the parallel death of the disillusioned young scientist mark the end of an era in Japanese history: the final termination of dark, destructive and corrupting fears in a defeated country; the arise of insecurity over weapons capable of mass destruction (add to this the uncertainty pervading Japanese refusal to possess nuclear bombs today); and the end to the post-war era itself.

Although other films were to be made by Honda in the 'Fifties, films of notable worth (e.g., THE MYSTERIANS in 1957), the Honda/Tsuburaya team would never again match GODZILLA in terms of its roddy stylisms, its revealing visual summation of post-war feelings and its uniqueness as a film commodity in worldwide movie theatres. Toho, cashing in on its greatest financial success, hacked out dozens of monster films as did its American competitors. But as usual, the first effort, unhampered by clichés, fresh and as yet free of necessities to merely "sell" at a predictable market, is the best. There can never be another GODZILLA.

The country is to be repaired, we are told in the final sequence, and life shall go on.

Historians interested in this dark era of recovery might find the film of extreme worth. If stripped of all ridiculousness, the film would mirror the frame of mind of a post-war Japan. It has been said that films reflect the times, and that often their only intrinsic future worth lies with this fact. It could not be stressed more.

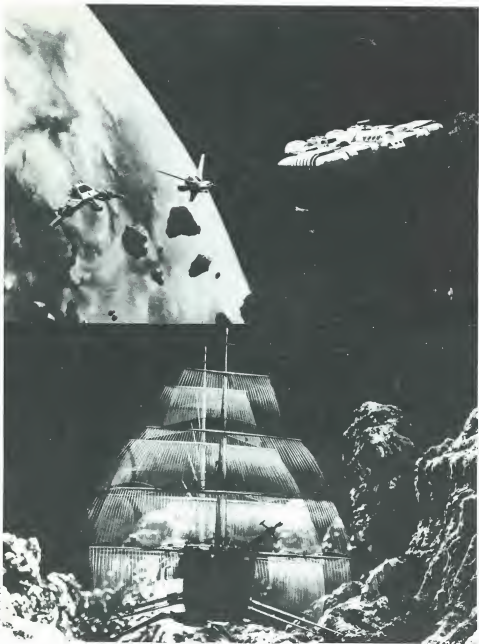
The cycle of destruction by fire and ice, by A-bombs and mythological dragon flame, by cold ignorance and dark, disillusioned reluctance...this cycle now complete, the self-determined spirit of the defeated is revived.

In the eyes of the defeated, war has always been some Godzilla, some evil, dark devil rising mythically, almost magically gifted with irrational destructive power, haunting technological man who has somehow convinced himself that he is civilized and superior to mere animalistic violence and swift, unpredictable death.





TOEI'S MESSAGE FROM SPACE





Japanese Fantasy Film Journal # 12 (1979)

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